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ETHICS AT THE CROSSROADS

THE NEW MORALITY

JOSEPH FLETCHER

HERBERT McCABE

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NEWS AND VIEWS

Pacifists should be aware that their position has, at long last, been adequately defined. The definition came from New York Auxiliary Bishop John Fearns, on the occasion of the recent consecration of two other New York auxiliaries in St. Patrick's Cathedral. According to the Brooklyn *Tablet*, the quote "impressed all present as particularly pertinent." Said Bishop Fearns: "In a previous generation, and in this, we have known conscientious objectors who were prepared to offer themselves for dangerous action with the medical corps, and we respected their tenets. But there has arisen of late a new and different type of conscientious objector, unaware, apparently, that our Defense Department is our Peace Department. A commentator on the American scene at the turn of the century has said: 'Any sensible man is a pacifist. But the true definition of a pacifist is one who never *starts* a fight.'"

•

Bishop John J. Wright of Pittsburgh has denied that he had anything to do with the "alleged" phone calls from his secretary to Catholic bookstores warning against stocking Joseph Dever's book *Cushing of Boston* because of uncomplimentary remarks in it about the Bishop.

The incident was reported here in the December 10 issue as follows: "In Pittsburgh, the secretary to Bishop Wright has 'suggested' that Catholic bookstores remove from their shelves all copies of Joseph Dever's book . ." The secretary in question, Father Robert Garland, admitted he had called the stores and told them "that the book reportedly dealt with Bishop Wright in an unkind manner. But they were told that it was up to their own judgments whether to display or sell the book. I acted after receiving word from the East about the book."

As we also reported, the book is somewhat less than scrupulously fair to the Bishop. In one section, the author puts to Cardinal Cushing a question containing some dubious allegations about the Bishop (thus getting them on the record without anyone actually making such charges). Then the author blandly adds: "The Cardinal looked at us, as if in agreement, but said nothing." Very dubious business.

•

A survey by the Canadian Peace Research Institute, discussed by Dr. Norman Alcock in the *United Church Observer*, claims that Roman Catholics and Baptists are more warlike than Anglicans or members of the United Church. The survey covered a thousand Canadians of different religions and no religion. Dr. Alcock said Catholics want nuclear weapons more than Protestants, and Protestants want them more than agnostics. "Warlike" was used in the sense of attitudes toward conventional defense forces, nuclear weapons and co-existence with Communism.

•

"(Pope John) was a miracle, a miracle sent from God. And miracles don't last; they are signs and we have to carry on with all our energy and all our brains." —Cardinal Ritter
in Frederick Franck's book,
Outsider in the Vatican

•

Archbishop William E. Cousins of Milwaukee was interviewed recently on WITI-TV. Asked about how laymen might become more active, he replied: "We do not mean taking over and running a parish. Instead, the (layman's) approach should be: 'I want to do what I can, now guide me.'"

•

The Inside Corner department of the Catholic monthly magazine *Reign of the Sacred Heart* had this to say about a story which hit the front page of many a Catholic newspaper in recent weeks:

"The most easily predictable story of the year in the Catholic press began this way in 1965: 'Academic achievement of pupils in Catholic schools is "significantly higher than national norms," according to preliminary reports from a nearly completed nationwide study of Catholic elementary and high schools.' The usual story about how Catholic school pupils are a statistically smarter bunch than public school pupils, was enhanced in 1965 by that early rosy report of a $350,000 Carnegie Foundation-supported 'Study of Catholic Education.' No one I know of is waiting bated breath for story beginning this way: 'Academic achievement of pupils in Catholic schools is just about the same as the national norm — when lower-class kids, poor "white trash," Negro, Puerto Rican and Indian slum kids are taken out of the norm.' When Catholic schools educate a proportion of the educational problem-children equal to the proportion educated by the public schools, then I will be properly impressed by that silly annual story about how Catholic school pupils are 'significantly higher.'"

•

Finally, our favorite quote in the entire St. John's dispute comes from the student newspaper for a year ago, January 8, 1965. The battle had already waxed hot over the issues of paternalism and lack of true communication between faculty and students, on the one hand, and the Vincentian administration, on the other. Janet Genzano of the *Torch* staff interviewed the then-President of St. John's, Father Edward Burke, C.M. Here is the exchange that we love best:

Q. Has the problem of communications among the faculty, students and administration negated the university's goal of becoming not only the biggest but the best Catholic university in the nation?

A. Communications in a large urban university are a problem, but with student newspapers and bulletin boards for administrative directives, this can be alleviated.

JOHN LEO

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Silence of Bishops

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: With regard to the reluctance of archdiocesan officials to say anything about Father Berrigan's relegation, COMMONWEAL readers might take some comfort from St. Ignatius of Antioch's doctrine about the silence of bishops. "The more anyone sees a bishop to be silent," he says to the Ephesians, "the more reverence should he feel towards him." And to the Christians in ancient Philadelphia he wrote: "when he (the bishop) is silent he is more powerful than those who speak." In other passages he indicates that silence is a prime characteristic of divinity. Presumably then, when a bishop is "unavailable for comment" he is most like God! (REV.) G.F. BARRY, S.J.

"World Apartheid"

Roxbury, Mass.

To the Editors: Father Tissa Balasuriya is right ("World Apartheid," Dec. 24) that our present restrictive concern for mere political democracy and our Western domestic bias have seriously diverted us from the urgent need for economic democracy on a world scale. Our bias is reflected in the recent sighing about the disappearance of work in a computerized America, forgetting that if the products of our fields and factories were somehow matched with the world's need there would be little cause for throwing masses of people out of jobs.

Most of our economic ethics is incredibly provincial. This is why we must listen as attentively as possible to the warnings issued by Father Balasuriya and Afro-Asian Christians like him. He does well to warn us that to millions of his fellows, there seems to be little difference between the interests of the Church and those of the Western powers.

He might have gone even further and

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PEACE OFFENSIVE

Bernard Fall has pointed out that the five-day pause in American bombing of North Vietnam in May of 1965 was hardly long enough to produce results, even if Ho Chi Minh had been interested. Five days probably gave too little time for the North Vietnamese to consult Moscow, placate their hawks and persuade the Chinese and the Vietcong—Washington took longer than that in the Cuban missile crisis, with far less need to consult anyone at all.

President Johnson apparently does not intend to make the same mistake again. At this writing, the bombing has been suspended for ten days, and the pause does not seem to have been accompanied with the crude threat to escalate that was contained in the May message from the State Department to Hanoi. This will be a far better—if long overdue—test of North Vietnam's interest in negotiations.

The current U.S. "peace offensive" is an extraordinary diplomatic move. It bears the Johnson stamp of massive and simultaneous efforts to catch the attention of anyone willing to listen. The weakness, of course, is that it may appear to the Communists as merely a Johnson spectacular to set the stage for more escalation. And it adds no new offer to the constantly asserted American interest in a negotiated settlement. Nevertheless, the efforts are welcome. They have raised considerable pressure around the world for peace talks, and they put the United States emphatically on record at a time when its credibility had reached a nadir.

The "suppressed" peace feeler in Eric Sevareid's article, the LaPira incident and the increasing publicity given to the accumulated contradictions

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in U.S. statements about Vietnam had taken their toll. Dean Rusk's arrogant dismissal of a quid-pro-quo settlement as a mistaken notion that "the burglar or the robber is entitled to something" did not help matters. The bombing of the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos and the announced willingness to cross the Cambodian border in pursuit of Vietcong certainly had all the appearances of escalation.

The LaPira-Fanfani episode showed how low the U.S. government's credibility had dropped, both abroad and at home. The current American "peace offensive" has recaptured a good deal of lost ground. It is true that it may be, as some domestic and foreign critics believe, a cynical American attempt to prepare world opinion for more devastating escalation of the war. (Reporters tell us that certain American military men are confident that this is the case.) These suspicions are the natural harvest of the Johnson Administration's erratic behavior in the past. We trust, however, that the current U.S. diplomatic efforts are precisely what they appear to be. This may be the last chance in the foreseeable future to end the slaughter in Vietnam. A failure this time would certainly strengthen the hand of the hawks and set the stage for a far more ferocious war. Even if it means jettisoning some of the conditions we have repeatedly set down for "unconditional discussions," this opportunity must not be missed. It may not come again.

THE PRESIDENT'S YEAR

Like other people, the beginning of a new year must strike Presidents as a good time to judge the accomplishments of the year just past. In this respect, the New York *Times* story of January 2, presented as an account of the description provided by a "high White House source" of Mr. Johnson's estimation of his work in 1965, is instructive. On the whole, he was pleased. His domestic record was solid, both in terms of the progress made on civil rights (at least legislatively) and, as he perceptively noted, in terms of the general acceptance of federal action on a broad variety of domestic issues. His judgment that the old and long argument over the "welfare state" has now been resolved in favor of federal action is probably sound. His harshest self-judgment he reserves for his failure to find a way out of the Vietnamese war. Again his judgment is sound. Not only did Mr. Johnson fail to resolve the crisis, but he also did his share to escalate the war; to date, the results of that escalation have been dismal.

Why has this been so? The story in the *Times* presents Mr. Johnson as feeling that he specifically failed "to convince Hanoi and Peking of the sincerity of its [the U.S.] desire for peace in Vietnam." If this is the way Mr. Johnson feels, it is not hard to see why he failed.

The great diplomatic "peace offensive," after all, came in the waning days of the year. Prior to that offensive, the main mark of 1965 was the American military buildup – and, with it, all of the hoop-la on the domestic scene emphasizing America's willingness to "resist aggression" and to make whatever sacrifices are necessary to "honor our commitments." This is, indeed, *one* way to go after peace; but it is not a way designed to reassure the other side that the real aim *is* peace. In unmistakable terms it says: peace, but peace in the way and under the conditions which preserve to the full our original aims. Hanoi and Peking, unfortunately, want the same kind of "peace"—their aims just happen to be different.

Mr. Johnson's legendary talents lie in the game of brokerage politics: a little give here, a little arm-twisting there, and all the while, talk, talk, talk. But the whole legend deals with the domestic Mr. Johnson. On the international relations front, the legend is mainly negative; he never had much to do with, much knowledge of, or much interest in foreign affairs. Fate has forced all of this on him – and it shows. His diplomatic moves consistently display a lack of finesse. His secrecy at home, far from strengthening the impression that brilliant things are going on behind the scenes, have only served to cast doubt on the substance and subtlety of his foreign policy. If you can't be brilliant, at least try to look like you are. Mr. Johnson has done nothing to suggest he can manage either task. (Consider, if you will, the way he handled the rebellion in the Dominican Republic.)

The real question is whether Mr. Johnson is capable of learning. The evidence so far is not encouraging. Whatever the fervor of the present peace offensive, its background is that of a very standard, almost manual-like set of assumptions about the way to force an enemy to change: confront him with firm words (this will shake his resolve); steadily raise the military ante (this will make him look for a quick way out); bomb and threaten to bomb even more (this will shatter his people and scare them into submission). The sterility of such assumptions should have been clear enough months ago; but there are no good signs that any others have been found. On the domestic front, Mr. Johnson has never used tools of a like primitiveness. Will he now succeed in finding fresh ones for dealing with the rest of the world?

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GOP HOROSCOPE

If theology is the queen of sciences, and philosophy the henpecked king, the knave science is unquestionably opinion-poll-taking. The latest refinement of ancient stargazing, it is naturally accompanied by a certain amount of wizardry, wild surmise, and the faint odor of brimstone. Unlike its betters, it is for hire, and therein lies its fascination and its incredibility. Its secrets can be purchased like a bolt of dry goods. On the other hand, its value is somewhat the less for that. We are like men of the Middle Ages contemplating the matter of indulgences. And this brings us, circumspectly, to the recent opinion poll taken by the GOP to ascertain its chances in this year's Congressional elections.

Having dropped theology and philosophy after the 1964 cataclysm, the desperate party brought in Ray Bliss, the Republican National Chairman, as chief stargazer and wonder-worker. The opinion pool is his trademark, so it was as a professional as well as a party man that he announced "areas of hope" for the GOP in 1966.

He was happier, perhaps, than mere "areas" would warrant, but that is his job, and here is how Mr. Bliss and the pollsters see it. The GOP stands an excellent chance to make gains in Northern urban areas, mainly in the East and Midwest, where Democrats made their greatest gains in 1964. The factors, according to the poll, include serious ethnic dissatisfaction among Italian and Polish voters unhappy over the loss of Cabinet posts and what they feel is the President's preoccupation with Negro rights. On top of this, Negroes seem to be turning toward the Grand Old Party in disillusionment over the shortcomings of the poverty program, especially the lack of fulfillment at the city hall level where Democratic machines largely hold sway.

How, then, do the Republicans plan to capitalize on their findings? By concentrating on proven urban vote-getters, the planners say. In Republican ranks, these include Governors Romney (Mich.), Rhodes (Ohio), Volpe (Mass.), Rockefeller (N.Y.), Senators Case (N.J.), Boggs (Del.), Cooper (Ky.), plus Percy of Illinois, running for Douglas' seat, and Attorney-General Brooke of Massachusetts, running for Saltonstall's.

If the poll is right, Brooke, a Negro, and Volpe, an Italian, should wrap it up for the Bay State, that is, if they don't find themselves campaigning against each other. The others, with one or two doubtful cases, fall within the moderate to liberal spectrum of Republicanism. Rockefeller, Case, Cooper and Percy are counted flaming liberals. What will they promise discontented Negroes that won't put off the other ethnic groups? Mr. Bliss doesn't say. His fellow stargazers are also mum. But we would not be surprised if President Johnson brings his former Postmaster, Mr. Gronouski, back from Warsaw where he is U.S. Ambassador, and installs Mr. Celebrezze, ex-Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, now a federal judge, on the Supreme Court or in some suitably elevated office at the earliest opportunity. Mr. Johnson uses antennae himself, thank you.

RESTRICTING TRAVEL

In permitting medical scientists to make professional visits to China, Cuba, Albania, North Korea and North Vietnam, the State Department is said to be experimenting with relaxed travel restrictions for all scientific personnel. It should be doing more. It should be removing entirely the arbitrary passport restrictions which currently hamper all American citizens who wish to observe conditions firsthand in these five nations.

The power to restrict the travel of American citizens has simply been assumed by the State Department. Congress has never legislated against travel in certain countries. Instead the State Department bases its policy on a legal argument which includes, among other things, the hypothesis that a declaration of national emergency made at the time of the Korean War is still in effect! In considering whether these passport restrictions are constitutional, the Supreme Court has blown this way and that; a clear decision may finally result from the current cases of unauthorized travel to Cuba.

But constitutional questions aside, the State Department's policy makes no sense. Sometimes the government argues Americans cannot be protected in the off-limits nations. Sometimes it argues that these nations are being punished. But are Americans in Cuba really in more need of protection than those in Russia, Indonesia, East Berlin or a dozen other places? In any case, might they not be old enough to decide things like this for themselves? And does a ban on American tourists really punish Albania?

During extreme emergencies and delicate negotiations, e.g., the Cuban missile crisis, foreign policy makers should be able to prevent any potentially disruptive travel. Congress ought to pass a bill allowing the State Department to limit travel to another nation—for a period up to 60 days. Such a ban could be prolonged only by an act of Congress, and even this within strict limitations.

Meantime, we look forward to getting our reports on North Vietnam from specialists in eye surgery instead of foreign correspondents and political scientists.

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A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE

If Pope Paul were an American priest, I presume his Christmas-time comments on Vietnam would get him silenced or sent to Latin America with Father Daniel Berrigan. After all, he came out strongly for negotiations to end the fighting, and he didn't say the National Liberation Front should be excluded. Perhaps even worse, he came out for a truce on Christmas, a proposal which was put forward by the Vietcong and which our State Department was quite prepared to ignore until the Pope spoke up. In U.S. politics there used to be sardonic little jokes about those who made the mistake of being "prematurely anti-fascist." Father Berrigan's mistake was that he was prematurely concerned with peace in Vietnam.

All this, I suppose, is a somewhat bitter little joke—but one with considerable truth in it. Why are so many American Catholics shocked when someone like Father Berrigan opposes official U.S. policy? After all, agree or disagree with him, but why shouldn't he have his say? If some priests strongly support the war in Vietnam, why should there not be critics of that war? One Eastern Catholic school recently participated in a support-the-war parade which prominently displayed the old chestnut, "My country, right or wrong, but my country"—a sentiment, it hardly needs saying, impossible to reconcile with traditional Catholic insistence on careful moral evaluation of specific acts of war, whether one's own country is involved or not. I heard no protests about this.

For years now, to be a Catholic meant passing all security tests with flying colors. In the McCarthy era the joke had it that the national security program was a procedure in which Fordham and Notre Dame men checked on the loyalty of Harvard graduates. Alger Hiss came out of the Ivy League; it was impossible to imagine him as the graduate of a Jesuit college. To a group like Catholics, whose loyalties had been called into question since the days of the Know Nothings, this was a happy situation.

This makes present developments all the more shocking to them, and I am sure this is the case for bishops and religious superiors too. All of a sudden, there is David Miller burning his draft card and Father Berrigan calling for a negotiated peace and even one poor boy who burned himself. After all these years of patriotic conformity, these events come as a shock, to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. There is something ironic here. When Quakers and other representatives of the "peace churches" demonstrate against war, no one is surprised. But when American members of the largest Christian Church in the world protest against war, everyone is surprised. If nothing else, it seems to me this fact alone should prompt Catholics to support their fellow-religionists who feel conscience-bound to make such a protest.

As for the Christmas truce itself, I don't think the United States came out of the initial exchanges with its stock very high. The plain fact is that once again the United States displayed extreme and public reluctance to some kind of feeler in the direction of peace. The Administration from the first treated the Christmas truce offer simply as a propaganda stunt by the Vietcong; indeed, it seems highly probable that we would have done our best to ignore it entirely if the Pope had not entered into the picture. Once Pope Paul spoke for the truce, of course, the Administration could hardly go completely against the tide of world opinion. But even then we tried a little one-up-manship, calling for a 30-hour truce, not because a longer truce is that much better but by our own explanation because this would give us a propaganda advantage. Thank goodness we at least had the sense to follow the Christmas truce with a peace venture in the form of a lull in the bombing of North Vietnam, the Goldberg consultation with the Pope, and the Harriman mission to Warsaw.

Up to that point, at least, the Administration had seriously weakened its credibility on Vietnam, here and abroad. A sizable section of the public no longer takes its statements at face value, precisely because the government has not been straightforward on its side. How can we expect Hanoi and the world to believe we seek peace when we react negatively to potential steps toward peace such as the Christmas truce? If we are interested in negotiations, why was the war escalated by us in the period when Italian Foreign Minister Fanfani was relaying peace feelers from Hanoi?

Questions like these cry out for answers. The North Vietnamese may remain intractable; they may be quite unwilling to negotiate. But like a good many other people who are not pacifists, I think the Administration should do two things: first, explain its attitude on a settlement in Vietnam forthrightly, and second, continue to demonstrate on every possible occasion that it really seeks negotiations and is always willing to make positive efforts to get them.

JAMES O'GARA

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The New Morality—I

LOVE IS THE ONLY MEASURE

JOSEPH FLETCHER

The new morality, so called, is taking a long, hard second look at some of our assumptions. It does not oversimplify the issues at stake, even though some of its professed advocates do, yet it most certainly poses the essential questions. It might be said to be a revolt against what Henry Miller, the paper tiger of the sex rebels, calls "the immorality of morality" (in *Stand Still Like the Hummingbird*).

Any serious discussion of the new morality should begin with philosophical candor. Let it be understood, then, that the new morality is a form of ethical relativism. A *locus classicus* might be Paul Tillich's blunt statement, "The truth of ethical relativism lies in the moral law's inability to give commandments which are unambiguous both in their general form and in their concrete applications. Every moral law is abstract in relation to the unique and totally concrete situation. This is true of what has been called natural law and of what has been called revealed law."

An old joke can serve to pose the problem. When a rich old man asked a lovely young woman if she would sleep the night with him she said, indignantly, "No." He then asked if she would do it for $100,000? She said, "Yes!" She even agreed to $10,000, but when he came down to $500 she exclaimed, "What do you think I am?" He replied, "We have already established that. Now we are haggling over the price." Is any girl who has "relations" (a debased way to use the word) outside marriage *ipso facto* a prostitute or loose woman, guilty of sin or wrong? Or, as the new moralist would say, does it all depend upon the situation?

There are at bottom just three lines of approach to moral decision-making. One of them, perhaps the least followed but having at least some following, is the antinomian or law-less (non-principled) method. It operates with spontaneous decisions. Christian antinomians or extemporists, such as those St. Paul opposed in Corinth, often claim to be above any moral law (since they are "saved" or guided directly by the Holy Spirit). In any case they repudiate not only all rules of morality but even general principles. Non-Christian antinomians, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, make their moral decisions with "autonomy" and "instantaneity," i.e., without help from general maxims, unpredictably, wholly within the situation, in the belief that one "moment" of existence is entirely discontinuous from others—so that we cannot generalize about our decision-making.

For example, even if you described in the most complete detail all of the facts involved and all of the considerations *pro* and *con* joining a labor union where the antinomian works, or whether he should respond to a plea for a loan from a good family man or from a hopeless wastrel, he could not possibly say how he might decide until he was there, then, led by God's spirit or his own. Spontaneity is the key to his method.

At the opposite end of the spectrum of approaches is legalism. In this ethical strategy the "situational variables" are taken into consideration, but the circumstances

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are always subordinated to predetermined general "laws" of morality. Legalistic ethics treats many of its rules idolatrously by making them into absolutes. Classical Christian ethics and moral theology ("seminary" or "manualistic" ethics and casuistry), like the conventional wisdom, has been mainly of this kind. Not all legalism is cruelly rigid or callous about sticking to the letter even if the spirit is ignored but too much of it is guilty on that score. The scriptural law of Protestant morality and the natural law of Catholic morality, each in its own way, have treated principles as rules rather than maxims. In this kind of morality, properly labeled as legalism or law ethics, obedience to prefabricated "rules of conduct" is more important than freedom to make responsible decisions.

For example, if you were a Roman Catholic husband and found that, for whatever reason, the only method of family limitation which worked was contraception, you would either have to go on begetting unwanted children beyond a responsible number or cease the unitive lovemaking which is a vital part of a good marriage. This would be because contraception is declared (at least as of this writing) by your Church to be always "against nature." If you were a Jehovah's Witness you would refuse a blood transfusion to save your life, or even your child's, because "the Bible says we must abstain from blood" (which it does, however differently you might exegete the "texts" cited).

The third method of approach is that of the "new" morality. This is situation ethics. In this moral strategy the governing consideration is the situation, with all of its contingencies and exigencies. The situationist enters into every decision-making situation armed with principles, just as the legalist does. But the all-important difference is that his moral principles are *maxims* of general or frequent validity; their validity always depends upon the situation. The situationist is prepared in any concrete case to suspend, ignore or violate any principle if by doing so he can effect more good than by following it. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in his prison-written *Ethics*, after conspiring to assassinate Hitler, "Principles are only tools in the hand of God, soon to be thrown away as unserviceable."

Adultery, for instance, is ordinarily wrong, not in itself but because the emotional, legal and spiritual entailments are such that the over-all effects are evil and hurtful rather than helpful—at least in our present-day Western society. But there is always the outside case, the unusual situation, what Karl Barth calls the *ultima ratio*, in which adultery could be the right and good thing. This writer knows of such a case, in which committing adultery foreseeably brought about the release of a whole family from a very unjust but entirely legal exploitation of their labor on a small farm which was both their pride and their prison. Still another situation could be cited in which a German mother gained her release from a Soviet prison-farm and reunion with her family by means of an adulterous pregnancy. These actions would have the situationist's solemn but ready approval.

How Is One to Judge?

With these three ethical perspectives in mind, how are we to "judge" the Puerto Rican woman in Bruce Kendrick's story about the East Harlem Protestant Parish, *Come Out the Wilderness*. She was proud of her son and told the minister how she had "made friends" with a married man, praying God she'd have a son, and eventually she bore one. The minister, dear silly man that he is, told her it was okay if she was repentant, and she replied, "Repent? I ain't repentin'. I asked the Lord for my boy. He's a gift from God." She is *right* (which, by the way, does *not* mean a situationist approves in the abstract of the absence of any husband in so many disadvantaged Negro and Puerto Rican families).

It is necessary and important to note this: that situation ethics or the "new morality" is *not* the existentialists' or antinomians' method. Unfortunately the waters of debate have been badly muddied since the second world war because some observers, both Catholic and Protestant, have got the two all mixed up and confused. Future historians of modern ethics may fix the start of this confusion in the advice of Roman Catholic moral theologians which led to an allocution by Pope Pius XII on April 18, 1952. He used the terms "existential" and "situational" as synonymous. On February 2, 1956, situation ethics in another papal utterance was called "the new morality," and ever since then the debate has been at sixes and sevens. The *situationism* of the "new" morality is definitely *not* existential, in the sense that secular and atheist exponents of it use the term.

There are three, not just two, alternatives open to honest people who want to choose their moral course, whether they happen to be Christians or not. We don't have to be either legalists who absolutize ethical principles, or extemporists who make decisions without any principles at all. We can choose (and I would urge it) to be situationists, acknowledging our heritage of canonical and civil principles of right and wrong but remaining free to decide for ourselves responsibly in all situations which principles are to be followed, or

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in some cases to decide that the "relevant" principles are to be rejected because they would result in more evil than good.

What, then, is good? Asking this question drives home the basic fact that the "new" morality, situationism, is a moral strategy or procedural doctrine which has to be seen in tandem or partnership with a substantive companion-doctrine—personalism. And "personalism" here means the ethical view that the highest good, the *summum bonum* or first-order value, is human welfare and happiness (but not, necessarily, pleasure). Good is first and foremost the good of *people*. Christians call it "love," meaning neighbor-concern or *agape*. This love means, of course, a social attitude, not the romantic emotion that the word has come to connote in popular literature. The Great Commandment orders Christians to love, i.e., to seek the well-being of people—not to love principles. Non-Christians may call it something else, for example, "justice" or "altruism" or "humanism" or the like, but whatever label they use, it is a personalist devotion to people, not to things or abstractions such as "laws" or general principles. Personal interests come first, before the natural or scriptural or theoretical or general or logical or anything else.

Sexual Ethics

When we think about the conflict between the old or classical morality, the law ethic, and the new morality, the love ethic, we can see that the nub of it is the choice between the notion that a thing is right or wrong inherently and intrinsically, given in the nature of the thing (maybe because God created it "to be what it is"), as legalists or absolutizers would say, or only contingently and extrinsically right or wrong, depending on the circumstances, as situationists or relativists would say. It goes back, in intellectual history, to such controversies as the realist-nominalist debate. The intrinsic idea of moral quality is Thomist, the extrinsic idea is Occamist. The situation ethic is extrinsicalist; it claims that moral quality is nominal, not real. Practical men may not recognize that this kind of philosophical issue is at stake, but it is.

It all depends on the situation, say the extrinsicalists. In some situations unmarried love could be infinitely more moral than married unlove. Lying could be more Christian than telling the truth. Stealing could be better than respecting private property. No action is good or right in itself. It depends on whether it hurts or helps people, whether or not it serves love's purpose—understanding love to be personal concern—*in the situation*.

The situational-personal ethic, in short, subordinates principles to circumstances and the general to the particular, as well as making the "natural" and the biblical and the theoretical give way to the personal and the actual.

For the sake of a clear and striking illustration we might turn to sex relations and the ethics of reproduction. And, furthermore, let us address the subject in terms of the *Christian* version of situation ethics. (We could use truth telling, or buying and selling, or diplomacy and national defense, or something else. The same considerations would come into play whatever the area or "field" of decision-making might be.)

Alas, the very word "morals" in popular use means sex conduct, as we can see in newspaper headlines about a "morals charge." (This ridiculous reduction of morality to sexuality probably got its start in English translations of references in the Bible to fornication, as when I Thess. 4.3 is rendered "abstain from immorality." The Greek and Latin texts without pruriency or evasion say *fornication*.) Actually, the "new morality" is a wide-ranging ethical theory of far more varied bearing than sex, but that is what it is focussed upon in the street debates. So be it. Suppose we look at sex, to give our discussion a specific set of operational terms.

Sexual intercourse may or may not be an act of love. Love, as understood in the Christian situation ethic, is an attitude of concern and not an emotion of desire. A *Playboy* cartoon went to the heart of the matter by showing a rumpled young male saying to a rumpled young female in his arms, "Why speak of love at a time like this?" The point is that, Christianly speaking, sex which does not have love as its partner, its *senior* partner, is wrong. If there is no responsible concern for the *other* one, for the partner as a subject rather than a mere object, as a person and not a *thing*, the act is immoral.

The new morality, therefore, requires its practitioners to be who-askers (who will be helped or hurt?)—not, as with legalistic morality, what-askers (what does the law prescribe?). Immanuel Kant, even though he was a legalist himself, was nevertheless right about his maxim: treat persons as ends, never as means. This is essentially the personalism of the Summary of the Law in the gospels: love God and neighbor, with nothing about following a code of law or a set of abstract, before-the-fact rules.

It comes down to this: people are to be loved and things are to be used. "Things" include material objects and general principles. Immorality occurs when things are loved and people are used. When anybody "sticks to the rules," even though people suffer as a consequence, that is immoral. Even if we grant, for example, that generally or commonly it is wrong or bad or

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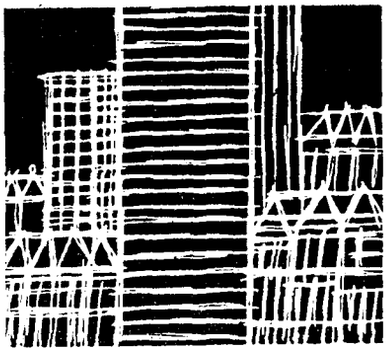
undesirable to interrupt a pregnancy, it would nevertheless be right to do so to a conceptus following rape or incest, at least if the victim wanted an abortion. (Legalism of the Protestant, "scriptural law" variety has no biblical prohibition of abortion, and like Jewish opinion approves of therapeutic abortions and is divided over the morality of non-therapeutic reasons for it.)



The Christian situationist says to all men, to all who care about others, whether they are Christians or not: "Your love is like mine, like everybody's. It is the Holy Spirit. Love is not the work of the Holy Spirit, it *is* the Holy Spirit—working in us. God *is* love, he doesn't merely 'have' it or 'give' it; he gives himself, to all men of all sorts and conditions: to believers and non-believers, high degree and low, dark and pale, learned and ignorant, Marxists and Christians and Hottentots."

Long ago St. Chrysostom said the essence of sin is in the substitution of means for ends. Modern social analysts are saying the same thing when they speak of "the error of substituting instrumental for terminal values!" Chrysostom meant that sin treats means as if they were ends in themselves. But in the Christian ethic (at least in its situational version) things are means only, and only persons are ends. We could restate it by the assertion that sin is the exploitation or use of persons. This is precisely what prostitution is. Therefore in a familiar phrase, the prostitute is far more sinned against than sinning. She is infinitely closer to righteousness than are her customers. In the same way, on the same logical base, we can say that the classical capitalist commodity theory of labor, largely a dead letter now due to trade unionism's struggles, is or was a sinful, evil principle.

In teenage social life if a boy seduces a girl in order to appear in his own eyes or his friends' as a Big Man, he is using her; he is guilty of sin or "moral evil." If a girl seduces a boy out of curiosity or some such motive, she is committing the same wrong; if she seduces him in order to lure him into marriage she is committing a far greater sin than simple fornication ever could possibly be, even if they are married to make it legal. Such married sex is legal prostitution and a case of sinning not only formally and materially but also with malice! Even if she lured him into marriage *without* fornication the guilt lies just the same. What is more despicable than a technical virgin, male or female? The new morality weighs motive heavily in its scales, along with means and ends. The new morality is not *soft* morality.

As we have noted, Karl Barth, the Swiss theologian, who speaks of "law" a great deal, nevertheless allows for what he calls the *ultima ratio*, the outside chance that in a particular situation what the law forbids can be excused. In this way Barth, like many Catholic moral theologians, is prepared out of mercy and compassion to excuse an act of fornication or a loveless marriage *in the situation*, in the rare case. But it would a matter of excusing an evil (because unlawful) act. For Barth and Catholic metaphysics, the evil is "real"—objectively given *de rerum natura* in such categories as fornication, adultery, homosexual acts, contraception, abortion, sterilization, and the like.

Is Anything Inherently Good or Evil?

This is not the situationist's view. For him nothing is inherently good or evil, except love (personal concern) and its opposite, indifference or actual malice. Anything else, no matter what it is, may be good or evil, right or wrong, according to the situation. Goodness is what *happens* to a human act, it is not *in* the act itself. This is, in a way, a "nominalistic" doctrine. Like the situationists, Emil Brunner, another Swiss theologian, is more plainly in the camp of such a morality. To use language not his own but in keeping with his thought, he sees that *goodness or rightness is a predicate of actions, not a property of them!*

A clarion statement of this position is William Temple's: "The rightness of an act, then, nearly always and perhaps always, depends on the way in which the act is related to circumstances; this is what is meant by calling it relatively right; but this does not in the least imply that it is only doubtfully right. It may be, in the circumstances, certainly and absolutely right." That is, the action even if unlawful, even if it violates a moral maxim or rule, will be positively right; not merely an excusable wrong!

Bishop Pike of California, following the situational method in large part, has turned in his ethical treatise (*Doing the Truth*) to the story of how Judith used her sex to save Israel from Holofernes' army. The Bible obviously approves and applauds her action, her deliberate sexual seduction. (They wrote the story in such a way as to leave her technically chaste by getting away

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before Holofernes got her into bed with him, thus illustrating the ethical dishonesty of legalism, as well as its willingness to accept the lesser of evils. But this is what the notion of intrinsic evil always degenerates into!) A situationist would also applaud Judith's action, but wouldn't be driven by the theory to extricate her from the logic of her seduction. In any case, the Biblical Judith is a model for governments which use a woman's sex to entrap enemy espionage agents in blackmail, to inactivate them. Is the girl who gives her chastity for her country's sake any less approvable than the boy who gives his leg or his life? No!

True chastity is a matter of personal integrity, of sincerity and purity of heart. It is not sexual. Righteousness or virtue is willing the good of the neighbor. Von Hügel said that "caring is the greatest thing, caring matters most." Not all legalists and not all relativists are agreed about sexual promiscuity, of course, but the chances are that the Christians among them look upon promiscuity as irresponsible, care-less, insincere, even as indifference. They (we) believe that promiscuity ignores and flouts the value and integrity of persons, turning casual sexual partners from true subjects into what some psychologists significantly call "love *objects*". It turns them into things. In the same way that sex is right or wrong according to its treatment of persons, so with the so-called "obscene." Frankness about sex is not wrong. As somebody said recently, obscenity is the word "nigger" on the lips of a Bull Connor type cop.

Even a transient sex liaison, if it has the elements of caring, of tenderness and selfless concern, of mutual offering, is better than a mechanical, egocentric exercise of conjugal "rights" between two uncaring or possibly antagonistic marriage partners. Sexual intercourse is not right or good just because it is legal (by civil or canonical law), nor is it wrong just because it is outside the law. So-called common-law marriages recognize this.

The personal commitment, not the county clerk, sanctifies sex. A man or wife who hates the partner is living in sin. A couple who cannot marry legally or permanently but live together faithfully and honorably and responsibly, are living in virtue—in Christian love. In this kind of Christian sex ethic the essential ingredients are caring and commitment. Given these factors, the only reason for disapproving sexual relations would be situational, not legal or principled. It would be because the circumstances, realistically and imaginatively weighed, with a responsible eye on remote as well as immediate consequences, balance out against the liaison rather than for it. There is nothing against extra-marital sex as such, in this ethic, and in *some* cases it is good.

As an example of the fact-weighing problem (situationism is *very* data conscious) we can cite a recent proposal by a Unitarian-Universalist minister in Michigan. He recommends that teenagers be prepared for sexual maturity in temporary trial marriages of limited duration and with parental consent. From a Christian perspective, most situationists (if not all) would hold that the teenagers would simply be practicing on each other, and the mere fact that their using each other would be *mutual* would only compound the evil, not justify it. The scheme seems unbelievably naïve on the score of emotional and cultural risks.

Advocates of Hugh Heffner's *Playboy* doctrine of promiscuity, arguing that sex is just "fun," are backing a naturalistic hedonism which is poles apart from the Christian ethic. Their argument is that anything sexual is all right if it does not hurt anybody. A lot hangs on that big word "hurt." But Christians say that nothing is right unless it *helps* somebody. Here lies the true issue of sex ethics—not moral maxims nor sentimentality nor romanticism nor antisexual fears. We do not praise a technical virgin whose petting practices are sexually unrestrained, nor do we condemn a loving transgressor of the law who is emotionally honest although technically unchaste.

If a defensive maneuver can be forgiven here, suppose we hear Msgr. Pietro Palazzini, a Catholic moralist and Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, in his article about situation ethics in the *Dictionary of Moral Theology*. He says that situation ethics "must not be understood as an escape from the heavy burden of moral integrity. For, though its advocates truly deny the absolute value of universal norms, some are motivated by the belief that in this manner they are better safeguarding the eminent sovereignty of God."

One last word. The *Christian* criteria for sex relations are positive: sex is a matter of certain ideals of relationship. These ideals are based upon a certain faith: about God, Christ, the Church, who man is, and his destiny. Therefore, if people do not embrace that faith (and most don't), there is no reason why they should live by it. And most do not! It is time we faced up to this. Nowadays in the "secular city" it is easier and easier to see who are committed Christians and who are not. On any serious view of the matter, sex is not the decisive thing. Character shapes sex, sex does not shape character. Virtue never goes out of style but styles change. If true chastity means a marital monopoly, then let those who believe in it recommend it by reason and example. Nothing is gained by condemning the unbeliever. Indeed, to condemn him is more unjust (immoral) than a sexual escapade!

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The fact is that all along churchmen have relied on *prudential* arguments against sexual freedom—the triple terrors of conception, infection and detection—not upon Christian sanctions. But modern medicine and urban anonymity have made sex relatively safe. The danger-argument is almost old hat. It is true, of course, that coital adventures may bring on delayed emotional reactions, but the same is true of petting. And in any case, these feelings are largely guilt feelings which changing cultural norms are making archaic or even antediluvian. The guilt is going. If Christians honestly and seriously believe that there are matters of *principle* at stake, as distinct from situational factors, they had better make them clear. And whatever they come up with, they aren't going to make a good case for absolute, universal, and unexceptionable ethical negatives. Or positives. The new morality is a better morality than that—than the old morality.

The New Morality—II

THE VALIDITY OF ABSOLUTES

HERBERT McCABE

For the New Moralists there are two sorts of ethics, one based on law the other on love. They contend that Christian moral teaching, which began as an anti-legalist ethics of love, has degenerated down the centuries into one of law. There is clearly a good deal of truth in this; moral theology, particularly in the Roman Catholic Church, has become legalistic and this does represent a departure from the authentic Christian tradition. The British catechism, now happily abandoned, on which I was brought up, had a section allegedly about charity. It began with a couple of questions about our obligation to love God (no mention, I need hardly say, of God's love for us) and then the third answer went: "We show that we love God by keeping his commandments, for Christ says, 'If you love me keep my commandments.'" From then on the compiler obviously felt more at home: "How many commandments are there?" "Say the ten commandments." etc. Nowhere was there any reference to Christ's words "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another."

This kind of thing really can be called legalistic and an appalling distortion of the Gospel message. It was, however, simply a popular reflection of the contemporary works of moral theology which were in fact manuals for confessors and devoted themselves to the demarcation and classification of sins. Such works have not yet been replaced. The Church is in desperate need of a new moral theology and there is as yet hardly any sign of it. We have a few scattered essays and the gallant but, I think, finally unsuccessful, attempt of Father Bernard Häring, and that is all.

I do not believe that the New Morality is what we are looking for. I think it presupposes a view of man and of society that is no longer acceptable in the twentieth century. The New Moralists seem not to have taken sufficiently seriously either Ludwig Wittgenstein or Karl Marx. I do not, of course, want to suggest that what they have to say is without value. On the contrary, the campaign against legalism, the attempt to appreciate the concrete predicaments of men, has been useful and necessary. The stress on the value of the human person is extremely welcome even though, as I shall suggest, the concept of the person that they have at their disposal seems to me a limited and bourgeois one. I take it, however, that I am not invited to speak of the vast area over which we should agree, but of that small but crucial area in which I believe they are mistaken. This concerns the validity of absolute moral principles.

To put it more simply, the question is: Are there some things that you must never under any circumstances do? I think it is possible to formulate such prohibitions, the New Moralists do not. They think that no law can be unconditionally binding because in every concrete situation law is subject to the over-riding consideration of love.

Let us be clear that this is not an argument about legalism. I mean by a legalist one who holds that good behavior consists precisely in obeying laws. He holds that conformity to law is not only a necessary but a *sufficient* condition for morally good action. Of course

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legalism is not usually an articulate theory; it is rather a disposition which shows more in what a man says than something he explicitly maintains. A man infected with legalism shows it by giving only perfunctory attention to any element in the moral life other than that of law. He believes, more or less consciously, that so long as a man obeys the law he is safe: conformity to the rules will get you by.

Now a man may reject such legalism because he holds that conformity to law is insufficient for good action, even if he thinks it is necessary. This was the position of, for example, Thomas Aquinas who in some 300 Questions of the *Summa Theologica* concerning morality has just 18 of them on law (and only one, incidentally, on "natural law"). I do not mention Aquinas because I think his moral theology sufficient for our time but because he is a good example of a man who rejects both legalism and the New Moralists' view of law. For Aquinas, love is the soul or life ("*forma*") of every virtue. By this he means almost the exact opposite of what a transliteration might lead one to expect. He means that every genuine virtue is just a form of love. Chastity without love is, for him, not true chastity at all but its corpse; and for an Aristotelian such as he was, a dead body is not even a body, it is a heap of chemicals which happens to be easily mistaken for a body. Moreover, he held that chastity without love would in a fairly short time cease even to resemble true chastity; like a corpse it would soon fall to pieces and begin to smell.

This is evidently not a legalist position and yet Aquinas certainly thought that some prohibitions were unconditionally binding; he thought, in fact that it is possible to describe a piece of human behavior which would always be wrong, which *could not* be an expression of love. Of course it is possible to do this tautologically by introducing some reference to wickedness or lack of love into your description of the behavior. You can safely say "Cruelty will always, under all circumstances, be wrong," because you are not prepared to count anything as cruelty unless it is loveless. But this would be trivial. Aquinas would maintain, and I think rightly, that it is possible to give a description of some piece of behavior which does not smuggle in any value terms and then to say that such behavior will always be wrong. For example, it would always be wrong to kill a baby by roasting it alive—and in case you think this is a fantastic example, remember that this is what napalm bombs and nuclear weapons do. (One exponent of the New Morality has, in fact, recently claimed that it could be an act of love to kill 100,000 people with an atomic bomb.)

The reason why a great many moralists reject this idea is that there seems to be a movement from a description of certain physical events (i.e., a description in physicists' language) to one in terms of value, and they cannot see how the jump is made. They cannot see how you can deduce from a mere description of a state of affairs, that it ought or ought not to be the case. I think this puzzle begins to dissolve once we realize that a description of human behavior, such as "killing a baby by roasting it alive," is not couched in physicists' language but in the language of inter-personal communication. A physicist, as such, knows nothing of killing, but only of movements of particles or whatever in space-time; killing is not, as such, a physicists' event, it is a human event. This does not mean, as the old dualist view of man would suggest, that a killing is a combination of two events, one a physicists' in the public world and the other a mental event (an act of "intention") in the private world. It was, I think, the greatest achievement of Wittgenstein to show that the mental world is not private. To have a mind is not essentially to have a means of withdrawing from the public world into a secret world of your own, it is to have a special way of belonging to the public world, it is to belong to a community.

Can Values Be Deduced From Facts?

What characterizes human beings is their special way of being together: their relations with each other are not just those of things with things, but of persons with persons. Their interactions are communication; descriptions of human behavior precisely as human are descriptions of what goes on in this world of communication. It is these descriptions (in which the significance of the behavior is part of *what* the behavior is) that are relevant to the formulation of moral laws. To say "Fred is killing an innocent man" is neither to speak in physicists' language nor is it to speak of what goes on privately in Fred's head—what he may be saying to himself silently while he is acting. It is to describe something as human behavior, as having a place in the system of communications that *constitutes* the existence of human beings. (Language, the use of signs, constitutes the human community, as sacraments constitute the ecclesial community: but *all* human activity is "significant," just as all of the Christian life is "sacramental.") It is a valid objection to the old Roman Catholic anti-contraceptive arguments that they were based on a physiologists' description of sexual activity rather than on a description of it as human behavior, as an activity of communication, an activity with significance and not merely with effects.

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Human action has significance in itself prior to any significance that may be given to it by what a man may have in mind when he does it—though this, of course, is also an important element in morals. Significance pertains in the first place to the community as a whole. I am saying this: Human acts have significance not the way stones have temperature but the way words have meaning. I cannot change the temperature of the stone just by taking thought, but neither can I change the meaning of a word just by taking thought, for it belongs to the language not to me. Nor can I change the value of my behavior by taking thought, for its value is its meaning in the total system of communications which is the human world.

I must say a little more about the "non-subjectivity" of meaning. A word does not have meaning because there is something that it stands for, not even a "mental thing," a concept in my mind. It has meaning because it has a certain function in communication. When we know how a word is used in a certain community we know its meaning; this *is* its meaning. It follows that I cannot endow a word with meaning privately. I can no more create private meaning than I can issue private money. Money is what it is and has its value by playing a part in the system of financial communication. (Money is just a particular kind of language). I do not confer meaning on my words by the ideas I have in my head when I use them. Meaning is thus, in a certain sense, "objective," though not in the way that the height of a tree or the speed of a train is an objective fact; meaning, again, is "subjective," though not in the way that a dream or a preference for kippers is subjective. Meaning belongs to the world of "inter-subjectivity," the world in which persons are present to each other not as object to subject but as co-subjects.

Language is the use of *sheer* signs; linguistic activity is simply for the sake of its significance and not for any physical effect. Other things we do for the sake of the effect they achieve but these activities too, in so far as they are human activities, have significance. When we extend the notion of meaning from the area of sheer signs (the use of which is merely one department of human behavior) to the total field of human inter-relations we speak of the *moral* significance of behavior. My words have meaning as playing a part in linguistic communication, my speech (or any other activity of mine) has moral significance as playing a part in the total system of communications that constitutes the human community.

The human body is the source of significant behavior. The human body is not, like a knife or a word, significant because it is used in a certain way; the body is not used, it uses these other things. The dualistic view of man, which has been such a constant temptation to Western philosophy, pictures a self inside the body and using it rather as an announcer inside a radio station uses the mechanism at his command to deliver messages to the outside world. The analogy is bound to fail fairly quickly not only because you have to be a body first of all in order to be *inside* anything, but more importantly because you have to be a body to *use* a medium of communication.

The human body is not, therefore, a medium but a source of significance, and this distinguishes it radically (substantially) from other things. Other things may be human by participation in bodily life—and everything that man touches he humanizes in this way. It is the purpose of human work to make the world man's clothing—but the body *is* humanly alive. As the Thomist said, human life is the substantial form of the body, that which makes it *what* it is; or, as Wittgenstein put it, "The best picture of the soul is the body." It is because there are human bodies that there is a world of communication and it is by my bodiliness that I belong to this world. Without a body I am absent—this is what happens to the dead. (The bodily resurrection of Christ asserts that He is present.)

Morality as Bodily Activity

The sphere of morality, then, is the sphere of bodily activity, not the activity of physical objects as such but of human bodies. Of course not every piece of human behavior we characterize as loving or wicked is itself a piece of overt bodily activity or inactivity. A man may have love or hatred in his heart without this being expressed in some single bodily activity. But in the first place such secret thoughts are defined by reference to some bodily activity and, secondly, they derive their moral value from the value of such bodily behavior. Thus I may have secret thoughts which are not expressed in words, not even perhaps in words that I imagine myself speaking inaudibly. But *what* I have been thinking is what I would say if I *did* express it in signs (and therefore with my body).

There is such a thing as simply having a wicked intention which is never realized. Thus the maintenance of the nuclear deterrent requires that large numbers of people should be ready under given circumstances to murder a great many innocent people. This intention exists even if the murder never actually takes place. Such an intention is not of course normally hidden; it is presumably the business of the Security Services to weed out of key positions people who have not got it,

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so it must be detectable in some kind of overt behavior. But the essential point is that the intention itself is only wicked because the act itself of using nuclear weapons on cities is wicked.

The human body is definitive of love. I mean by this that in order to explain the meaning of "love" you have to describe some bodily activities: feeding the hungry, visiting the imprisoned, etc. It is true that we speak of God as loving although He is not a body, but when we say this we take a word whose meaning we understand in a bodily context and extend it into a realm which we do not understand. When we say that God is loving, as when we say anything else about God, we don't know what we mean; we are using words to try to mean something. Moreover: "In this the love of God was made manifest amongst us, that God sent His only Son into the world that we might live through Him." We only know the love of God in the bodily life of Christ, and primarily, of course, through our sacramental sharing in the bodily life of the risen Christ.

"Love," then, has meaning by reference to human bodies in their various complex relations of communication, and ethics is the analysis of love. I am not maintaining a behaviorist view that love is a particular set of bodily activities; if this were so we could prescribe love by prescribing the "correct" activity in each situation: this would be a legalist position. On the contrary, loving, like thinking, is an open-ended concept which is exemplified in an indefinite number of ways. There are methods of calculating but there is no method of thinking; similarly, there is no method of loving.

This half of the truth is well recognized by the New Moralists. What needs to be seen too, however, is that if "love" is to have any meaning at all, there must be pieces of behavior which count as unloving, just as there are pieces of behavior which count as muddled thinking. If we can describe such pieces of behavior then we can lay down absolute prohibitions, for even the New Moralists recognize that the command to love is absolute.

Let me try to make that a little clearer. There is no single bodily activity which is playing football. When we imagine a man playing we think of him running about a field kicking a ball, but of course a man can be engaged in playing football while standing perfectly still or while performing some maneuver that has never been seen or imagined before. Playing football does not consist in following out a choreographer's script mechanically, it is a creative activity—only human beings can play football. But if we were told that absolutely *any* activity could count as playing football, we should begin to feel that the word had lost its descriptive content and that while it might have significance as, say, an incantation, it was of no use for differentiating between various human activities. A recommendation never to stop playing football would then be a cheerful noise rather than a useful directive.

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The Dualism of the "New Morality"

Now the New Moralists seem to hold that "loving" can be used to differentiate between kinds of behavior, and is therefore descriptive, but also that there is no possible piece of behavior which might not be called "loving." I think it is possible for them to hold this only because they believe that the adjective "loving" is descriptive not of bodily behavior as such but of something else that accompanies it. I think, in fact that the New Morality only becomes plausible on a dualistic view of man according to which moral values attach to events in an "interior" invisible life which runs alongside a man's public physical life. Activities in the public visible world are in themselves morally neutral. We speak of them as virtuous or wicked according to whether they are accompanied or not by an act of loving in the interior life. The two lives are not intrinsically connected; we can make rough empirical generalizations about which public acts are usually accompanied by love, but such rules of thumb have no sort of necessity.

"One cannot," says the Bishop of Woolwich, "start from the proposition that sex relations before marriage or divorce are wrong or sinful in themselves. They may be in 99 or even 100 cases out of 100, but they are not intrinsically so, for the only intrinsic evil is lack of love." Here we have an admirably clear statement that love does not consist in actual behavior but in something else which may accompany behavior. If follows from this, that moral laws which must, of course, be about bodily activity (or inactivity) cannot be about what morality is about, for morality is certainly about love. The most we can say is that it is extremely probable that if a man deliberately burns a child to death this

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will turn out not to have been an act of love, just as it is extremely probable that a man who has voted conservative all his life will do so again. Such generalizations are a useful guide but no more. We cannot make sure predictions about what behavior in a given situation would be unloving; we can only enter the situation, at least imaginatively, and see what happens.

The question I would put to the New Moralist, then, is the one that the post-Wittgenstein critic would put to any philosophical dualist: If there are no public criteria by which we may recognize at least *lack* of love, how do you recognize it yourself? If the word "love" does not have a meaning in the public language (which implies at least criteria of its *mis*-application) how can it have meaning to you, how do you know that what you are doing is loving?

The second of my criticisms of the New Moralists concerns their use of the word "situation." They maintain that we should approach each moral situation with an innocent eye, we should be sensitive to its complexity; we should not seek merely to classify it according to preconceived categories. We should not say simply: "Here we have a clear case of adultery, it must stop," but "Here we have these particular people in these particular relationships in this place at this time: what now is the best for them in terms of their personal integrity and fulfillment, how can they best be brought to maturity in Christ in and through this situation?" The first attitude is characteristic of the civil law. What the court wants to know is whether or not you were exceeding the speed-limit, whether or not you deliberately shot this man, it is not concerned with the whole of your human situation but simply with one aspect of your life, where it impinges in a fairly crude way on the lives of others. It is doubtless an excellent thing that magistrates and policemen should have these limits on their range of legitimate interest, but it makes them a poor model for the moralist whose subject matter should be human life as such.

It would be hard to find anyone to disagree with platitudes of this kind. What is new about the New Morality is the rather limited view it takes of the human situation in which a man lives. It deals, it seems to me, essentially with Suburban Man and supposes that his situation is his suburb. A man's context is thought of as the people next door, the men he does business with, the enemies and friends he makes, the people he would mention in his autobiography. That is why I have described their notion of the personal as bourgeois.

Let us by all means jettison the "natural law" view of man, according to which Fred is of a certain nature with a certain function rather like a hammer or a lawnmower. Once we understand what man is "for" we can tell what would be appropriate and what inappropriate behavior. Let us say instead that Fred exists in his world, in his dynamic personal relations with others, that the activity which is authentically *his* is to be discovered not by contemplating any static essence of man but by considering the existence of Fred in his context. Let us do this; but then the question arises insistently: What is my context? Or, to put it another way: Who is my neighbor? The parable of the Good Samaritan is notoriously easy to misinterpret. We say "When I meet someone beaten up by the roadside, *that* is my neighbor." But we are inclined to place the emphasis on the meeting instead of on the need for help. This is a tendency I detect in the New Morality.

The Varied Contexts of Life

I exist, in fact, in many contexts and the problem of morality—the problem of really being myself—is not simply to do justice to one selected context but to get the priorities right. Do I at the deepest level exist amongst the people I meet or amongst mankind? Do I have a personal relationship only with those I meet or with all who share a common life—and ultimately this means all men? Is my basic situation that of a man amongst the three or four people obviously involved in my marriage problem, or is it that of a man amongst my fellow men? As soon as we recognize that there are many overlapping situations and that there are priorities among them, we recognize the possibility of moral tragedy—that what is best for these people in their ultimate situation may not be what is best for them in this obvious context.

As I write this we have a clear illustration of it in Southern Rhodesia: First there is the doctrinaire classifier, the man who has never really looked at the details of the Rhodesian situation at all. He says: "Here we have a clear case of racial discrimination, it must stop." He does not know any Rhodesians, black or white, he does not know the complex personal relations between them; he simply applies a crude moral code. Next we have the white Rhodesian, or more likely, his friend who has visited him. He will come back and tell you how humane and decent the whites really are. If you actually lived there, he says, if you knew the people involved, you would realize how absurd the doctrinaire picture is. These people have built a real civilization; there is no brutality, no lynching; a Negro is legally entitled to enter the best hotel in Salisbury. The whites are not tyrants and slave-owners desperately trying to retain their power. They are just ordinary decent chaps

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who understand the native and are genuinely seeking in the given concrete situation to do the best for all the people involved. God knows what would happen to everyone if the Communists had their way and every African had a vote . . . and so on.

If we disagree with this apologist it is not because we prefer the abstract doctrinaire position, it is because we think him not sufficiently aware of the concrete situation in which the white Rhodesian actually lives. He has seen only the narrow circle of people white or black, whom he "personally" knows. He has missed the full range of the situation which extends in fact to the limits of mankind. A man is not only with the people he meets but with all men and he is part of a stage in human history. The demands of this total situation may mean the destruction of much that was valuable in the narrower context.

The industrial revolution destroyed a traditional way of life the value of which was obvious in its own context and the defects of which were only apparent in a much wider setting. This culture collapsed because its capacity for valid personal relationships was restricted to too narrow an area. The ethic of the "situation" takes no account of the need for this kind of revolution and I think it is just this that commends it to western liberalism. Revolution means a questioning of the situation, it means that we are not content to do the best we can in the given circumstances but that we change them. Both attitudes are exemplified in the early church. St. Paul was situational about slavery; he tried to show how a man may exercise Christian love within this setting. On the other hand the early Church was revolutionary about marriage: the idea of monogamous divorceless marriage, of total sexual commitment of a man and woman was no reformist attempt to get the best out of the marriage situation. It was a radical re-statement of what marriage is, it set sexual relations in a new and wider context, the context of redemption as St. Paul shows in Ephesians. The full implications of the Christian view of sex have not yet been worked out by the Church but at the very start the proclamation of "One man, one wife" was at least as subversive and "impractical" as the African demand for "One man, one vote."

When therefore we come across a "man of principle," someone who rigidly or ruthlessly abides by a course of action at the expense of what seem to be the obvious demands of kindness in a situation, we need to ask: Has he got his nose buried in the rule-book so that he can't see what is in front of him, or is it that he sees more than what is in front of his nose? What we call "absolute" moral demands are just the demands of the total human situation as far as we can see them—and I believe it is part of the fact of divine revelation that we are helped to see them. Such demands may conflict with the demands of a smaller situation into which we have entered, but the absolutist morality is based on the priority of the situation into which we enter by being born.

Nothing takes precedence over the demands of the personal relationships in which I am involved by simply belonging to mankind. To exist at all is to be involved with others: "Social activity and social mind by no means exist only in the form of activity or mind that is *manifestly* social . . . even when I carry out scientific work—an activity which I can seldom conduct in direct association with other men—I perform a social, because a *human* act. It is not only the material of my activity—like the language itself which the thinker uses—which is given to me as a social product. My *own* existence *is* a social activity" (KARL MARX).

A rejoinder by Professor Fletcher

AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT

There are lots of reasons for welcoming Herbert McCabe's position paper – for its freshness among other things. It is when the ecumenical dialogue with Roman Catholics is driven down from the formalistic level of theological doctrine to the dynamic level of theological ethics, where the real believing is shown by the behaving, that an encounter in depth takes place.

Father McCabe is not prepared to go as far as Father Louis Monden, the Belgian Jesuit moralist, who says (in his *Sin, Liberty and Law*) that "we must clearly affirm with the great classical authors that Catholic morality is, in fact, a *situation ethics*" (his italics). All the same he *is* ready to confess that he does not regard Aquinas' ethics as "sufficient for our time," and with that we are ready and able to talk! There is, I might say, hardly a trace in what he has written of the "peccametry" or slide-rule-for-sins approach so prominent in the old morality.

Up to this point neither of us has taken adequate note of how old the "new" morality is, at least in the history of Christian ethics. The situation ethic is the one that Jesus endorsed. Indeed, the conflict between

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Jesus and Pharisaic Judaism was entirely an ethical one, not doctrinal. Jesus was, after all, in Wellhausen's famous phrase, a Jew.

When St. Paul took up the cudgels on behalf of Jesus' challenge of the Torah law ethics, he added to his task an additional conflict, a doctrinal one – the incarnational faith about who this Jesus was, who dared to recommend that a hungry man ignore the sacral laws and break open the tabernacle to eat the reserved sacrament, the "shew bread." Paul like Jesus taught that whatever is *expedient* in the situation is good, if it serves love's purposes. It was an ethic of responsible freedom (grace), over against an ethic of obedience to laws. And almost overnight, of course, legalism regained its control; the old morality built new and "Christian" systems of canonical and moral laws. (Reread Ivan's legend of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoyevsky's novel, *The Brothers Karamazov!*)

There are two complaints against the new morality in Father McCabe's treatment. In one he goes to the heart of the matter, the issue as between intrinsic and extrinsic views of morality, by trying to defend the old morality's claim that there are "some things that you must never under any circumstances do." His second complaint is against what he suspects to be a "bourgeois" narrowness or myopia in the new moralists' comprehension of situations. Let's take each complaint up for a brief rejoinder, in his order.

The first one is far and away the more important and the more solidly based. That is to say, Father McCabe puts his finger quite correctly on a real issue. The disagreement here is not based on any misunderstanding; he appears to oppose the new morality because he understands it only too well! He follows St. Thomas' realism, finding the locus of value in certain human acts, where as I as a nominalistic ethicist take a relativistic and pragmatic view, seeing right or wrong as predicates but not as properties.

The personalism in his ethics, or what Gordon Allport has called "interpersonalism," strikes an answering chord in the new morality. But as a new ontological basis for the old morality's realistic idea of the good it proves to be far less than convincing. Even though he repudiates "the old Roman Catholic" physicalism, his attempt to objectify value in a semi-behaviorist description of goodness as intrinsic ends up as almost a mystique of a sort: no sale. (This is no quarrel necessarily with his treatment of the *communication* side of "meaning" in linguistic analysis, or what he calls its "intersubjectivity." My challenge is to his opaque treatment of *what* he "means" to communicate!)

I entirely agree with Father McCabe that we can state action-propositions without smuggling value terms or moral judgments into them. Indeed, I would go farther: I would say that for critical ethical purposes it is necessary to outlaw value factors, whether explicit or implicit. But therefore I must protest his doing so in spite of what he says. He goes on, in spite of it, to imply that nuclear deterrent armament "embodies" an intention to *murder* people. As a pacifist he is, of course, pre-committed in principle or moral "law" (here is the doctrinaire rub) to treating nuclear weaponry as intrinsically unjust killing. As a realist or intrinsicalist he is, in doing so, only adhering to the logic of his value-theory.

(At another time we could discuss – not, perhaps, disagreeing as much as we do in this exchange – what is entailed in Father McCabe's profoundly true and curiously Lutheran assertion of the *deus absconditus:* "When we say that God is loving, as when we say anything else about God, we don't know what we mean; we are using words to try to mean something.")

The Charge of Dualism

As a major part of his reasoning Father McCabe holds that the new morality is somehow dualistic, but he has not succeeded in showing that it is. Unless, of course, the very concept of ethical antinomy – of good and evil or right and wrong – is itself dualistic! But that would be a sloppy use of the term and Father McCabe does not so use it. His point is, apparently, that the situationist or "new" moralist is dualistic if his intention to act lovingly (his "interior, invisible life") does not always coincide with his actions (his "public, physical life"). To dispose of this forced assertion we need, I suggest, merely to recall his earlier remark when supporting his own legalist-pacifist judgment on nuclear warfare: "There is such a thing as simply having an intention which is never realized." Exactly!

McCabe asks the situationist, "If there are no public criteria (he means, surely, *objective* criteria, to be non-Wittgensteinian for a moment!) by which we may recognize at least *lack* of love, how do you recognize it yourself?" The reply is: "The lack of love is indifference, not hate, and the work of love is the active will to contribute to the neighbor's wellbeing; what these will be in practice will vary according to the situation." Father McCabe wants me to say that the presence or absence of love is in the action itself (telling the truth, shooting a man, feeding a child, fornicating, alms giving); he cannot free himself from the realist assumption that love is a property.

But human love cannot be reified. It is to be pred-

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icated of human acts, it does not "infuse" them. It is something that *happens* to be true of an action rather than residing *in* it. Love is contextual, not phenomenal. Theologically expressed, only with God is love a property. With finite men it is relative and imperfect and contingent, depending for its measure upon the interplay of motive or intention and the *Gestalt* or configuration of situational factors.

Taking Account of Consequences

Father McCabe's second complaint comes down to a charge that, to use the language of ethical analysis, the situationist new morality only takes immediate consequences into account and *fails* to weigh seriously the remote consequences at stake in moral decision-making. In short, he suspects us of dealing with artificially delimited situations or contexts. This he calls suburban and bourgeois.

God forbid that we should be guilty of such things! But McCabe really does not show that we are. Indeed, he only claims he finds "a tendency" which he only "detects" at that. His illustration, the struggle for justice in Southern Rhodesia, hardly serves his purpose since situationists could, and do, add all of the situation's elements up to a balance in favor of Britain's and the black Rhodesians' rejection of white supremacy (*this* situationist does, for example!). At the same time, doctrinaire advocates of white supremacy "in principle" can and do characteristically favor the Ian Smith forces in the struggle, just as doctrinaire advocates of black liberation "in principle" favor Wilson's policy.

Nevertheless, even though reference to Rhodesia settles nothing either way as to the validity of the old and new moralities (Father McCabe at least clearly favors *reform* of the old morality), the discussion has helped to remind us that the social complex is involved in moral choices. Or, to put it a bit differently, every personal decision lies within a total context of social policy and social welfare. Surely, to use a familiar label, the situationist must be sophisticated enough to be *utilitarian*: he is to try responsibly to decide his course with due regard to the greatest amount of love for the greatest number of neighbors possible. Contrary to Tolstoy's opinion, love cannot wear blinders, seeing only one or two neighbors at a time.

I had already remarked that *personalism* is on the new morality's team, and that Father McCabe approves of at least that much. Now we may add utilitarian *distributism*, which he rightly thinks is required by any serious ethic.

In conclusion, then, the new morality is a three-part package: it is situationist in its strategy, personalist in its norm and first-order value, and distributist in its range and outreach. It cannot cut its cloth according to any code or system of prefabricated laws, no matter how illuminating they may often be, and regardless of whether they are claimed to be natural and/or scriptural. Nothing but love is good in and of itself, and love is, in fact, only an imperative, not a property. It is what we serve, not something we are or have. God may be love, as St. John believed, but we human beings are only commanded to act lovingly – according to the situation.

A rejoinder by Father McCabe

THE TOTAL CONTEXT

I find it interesting that each of us was so anxious to repudiate his own end of the spectrum. I took elaborate pains not to be labeled a legalist while Professor Fletcher tried equally hard to show that he was not an "existentialist" or antinomian. He half convinces me of this. This is because he is antinomian only half the time, the rest of the time he is a good old-fashion consequentialist – one who believes that human acts are good or bad simply according to the goodness or badness of their consequences.

The ordinary existentialist believes that you can't make any moral judgments until you are *in* the situation of decision. Professor Fletcher believes merely that you can't make valid judgments unless you take account of the whole situation of decision: there is no such thing for him as deciding that there are, for example, things men must not do to each other whatever the circumstances. Taking the situation into account, however, means for him different things at different times: sometimes it means evaluating the effects of your action, sometimes it means taking into account something called "caring," the presence of which is the hallmark of a good act. This caring which is distinct both from the act itself and its effects, seems to be some kind of psychological state. Neither of these positions seems to me plausible.

Let us begin with "caring." This seems to be much the same as "loving" and it is something that may or

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may not *accompany* actions. It is not itself displayed or exercised in ordinary activity. Professor Fletcher, for example, does not believe in sexual love; for him sex and love are, or can be, *partners*. He does not say this unthinkingly, he is fully aware of the implications of his position. Thus he says quite explicitly that chastity is not sexual. This is because, as he says, "it is a matter of personal integrity, of sincerity and purity of heart" and for him, evidently, sex can never be any of these things, it can only be accompanied or partnered by them. Professor Fletcher does not tell us how we are to recognize caring or loving or purity of heart in ourselves. I suspect he believes that we "just know" when we care for somebody or love somebody, and in that case he is in a very similar position to the old antinomian who "just knew" what the Holy Spirit was guiding him to do. Most Christians think that we can tell whether we love by considering our behavior (and in particular our misbehavior): "Love is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful . . . (1 Cor. 13)."

Not only does Prof. Fletcher not tell us what caring is like, he also omits to explain for whom we ought to care. If the proper object of care is an individual – and he does seem to suggest this – why should I care for this individual instead of that? Almost all moral decisions of the slightest interest involve choosing the person who is to be hurt. To be told to care isn't any help here. On the other hand, if we take the view that the person exists in his communal relationships and that the primary object of care is the community or field of communication that makes personality possible, then we are going to find that sometimes, in extreme cases, the "caring" act is one that doesn't obviously benefit any nearby individual and may indeed harm nearly everyone in sight.

Setting Limits

The other side of Professor Fletcher is a consequentialist and I shall not delay over the objections to this which are as old as the theory itself. In the first place how do we set a limit to the "consequences" of an act? Does an action change in moral value as history brings forth ever new consequences? This is a fine position for a historian but not much use to someone who has to make a decision. In the second place, if we may not say that acts are good or bad in themselves, how can we say this about consequences. If bombing Vietnamese peasants is neither good or bad in itself but becomes good because its consequence is to save men from Communism, how do we decide that it is good to save men from Communism? Of course consequences must make a difference to moral judgment, but consideration of them can't be what judging *means*. However this is a stale debate; the new moralists should offer us something fresher than that.

Two passages in Professor Fletcher's paper illustrate why it is *urgent* to stop playing the new morality game: "In any case, the Biblical Judith is a model for governments which use a woman's sex to entrap enemy espionage agents in blackmail, to inactivate them. Is the girl who gives her chastity for her country's sake any less approvable than the boy who gives his leg or his life? No." Quite apart from the breathtaking implications of "gives her chastity" – as though chastity were some kind of individual possession like a limb instead of a loving relationship with others (Stalin gave up mercy and love for his country's sake, is he any less approvable . . . etc) – the really disturbing thing about this is its underwriting of a political set-up in which such practices are accepted as "realistic" and normal.

An even more revealing statement is this one, after the story of the woman in East Harlem: "She is right [which by the way does *not* mean a situationist approves in the abstract of the absence of any husband in so many disadvantaged Negro and Puerto Rican families.]" No, not in the abstract, just in the concrete. "She is right" is a betrayal of the revolution that is required in East Harlem. Of course such a woman caught up and lost in the jungle of the acquisitive society may be blameless, may be a saint, and of course the first thing that matters is to understand and sympathize with her immediate position; but she is *wrong*. To say she is right is to accept, as she does, the social situation in which she lives. A genuine moral judgment cuts deeper than that; it questions such a "situation" in terms of something greater. When we say "You can't apply the same high moral standards to slaves as you do to us" we accept slavery as an institution. Of course to punish or condemn the slave for lying or stealing is to hit the wrong target; it is the masters who bear the blame, but the blame is for the slave's wrong action.

I find it significant that, with all their disclaimers about morality having a much wider field, situationists do in fact incessantly talk about sex. I think the reason for this is that in the moral problems that arise concerning sex it is easy to believe that only a few people are really involved. It is relatively easy to forget that this activity, like all human activity, takes place in the total human context and has implications for all mankind. It is because my membership of the human race has implications for all I do that situationism, the new morality, is an inadequate account of human behavior.

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THE PAST AS PAST

THE STAGE

In case you're wondering what a Hogan's Goat is, it appears at first glance to be a theatrical freak or hybrid, like a mule or swoose—half dead-pan pastiche à la the Boyfriend, half straight historical play: one of the more interesting mutations to have been tried lately.

But "Hogan's Goat" differs from most historical plays in at least one important respect. From Aeschylus to Robert Lowell and points between, the main object of these plays has been to use the past to make points about the present—a tactic that probably dates back to the need to fool the cave-bully and which is still handy for fooling whoever it is you want to fool. But it is basically a trick. It suggests to those capable of cracking the code that nothing ever really changes, that the witches of Salem were simply liberals in Mother Hubbards and that Melville's Negroes and Baldwin's were brothers under the skin. A palpable fraud: of course nothing ever changes when the past is in the hands of a modern dramatist. How could it? Arthur Miller can dress up as a witch if he likes, but the pipe and spectacles will give him away every time.

When the historical playwright is someone like Mr. Lowell who knows precisely what he is up to, this trickery is more than legitimate. To take the essence of a modern situation and deck it in strange garments, to mythologize it, is to tell us something about the present that can be got at in no other way. But the point about "Hogan's Goat" is that it does not exploit the past for its stage properties in this way. The playwright has somehow managed to think himself back into the past, and to address us from there. He uses the past to make points about the past.

Not the real past exactly, but the real theatrical past: not the way the Irish were in the 1890's, but the way they thought they were. Nobody in real life could have been quite so consistently melodramatic as the characters in "Hogan's Goat"; but egged on by just such plays, they probably gave it a good try.

In fact, Irish Americans of more or less that vintage often seem like characters in a melodrama—which may be where the author got his idea in the first place. No disrespect intended, but Cardinal Cushing's eulogy for President Kennedy was a perfect example of the old grand-piano style. Mr. Alfred, living in Boston, has presumably heard a good deal of this orotundity, but he has listened to it with respect—as verbal conventions go, it is not such a bad one. It allows for much bad poetry, but also for much wit and color. And occasionally the bad poetry comes off.

Anyway, it's all there in the play. Mr. Alfred has found a nice loose verse form which leaves room for the florid simile and the pungent aside. The love scenes are awful, like your Aunt Minnie singing "I'll take you home again Kathleen," but this is absolutely intrinsic to the rhetoric; and it is balanced by plenty of inventive vituperation which is the other side of the coin. (If Cardinal Cushing had been denouncing a foe, which God forbid, instead of praising a friend, it would have been a darling speech.)

It is Mr. Alfred's special achievement to have written with real vitality and conviction in this alien style. He does not make fun of it in "Boyfriend" style, but forces us to accept it almost as seriously as the original audiences must have, as a vehicle for genuine emotion.

Almost. Unfortunately, all the skill and conviction in the world cannot get us to sigh a real sigh over the marriage certificate in the strong box, or the wife expiring on her husband's breast at just the right moment. Ultimately the play is sabotaged by its formal limits. Melodrama is something you laugh at, and if the author has finessed you out of that, you do nothing.

But if the creaky plot is neither funny nor sad, but a kind of "Up in Central Park" without the music, the underlying fable has considerable force. A young politician named Matthew Stanton (Ralph Waite) confronts an old one, Edward Quinn (Tom Ahearne) over the dead body of one Agnes Hogan, a woman they have both loved. Their prevailing passions, as Irishmen in the 1890's, are political, but they are complicated men —too complicated finally for the melodramatic form, tragic heroes in a play that by definition falls short of tragedy. The effect is curiously lopsided: the atmosphere has a higher voltage than events warrant. The tune is better than the words. (*At the American Place Theatre*)

WILFRID SHEED

DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

THE SCREEN

Carlo Ponti, the producer of "Doctor Zhivago," has said about his film "This was not only my greatest challenge but an unforgettable experience made rich by such rare talents." The making of "Zhivago" was indeed a great challenge; however, as distinguished as the talents are who were connected with the movie, I'm

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not sure they met the difficult encounter with flying colors. Perhaps a lengthy novel like Pasternak's (which is not really a novel at all but prose poem whose main character is an observer not a doer) is not material for cinema. Or if it is done in this medium it should be done in the manner of "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" or "Wild Strawberries," in which past and present are intermingled, and ideas and symbols are more important than plot.

No doubt the talented makers of "Zhivago" did the best they could with their tough assignment. To Robert Bolt was handed the most difficult job. He tackled the rambling novel, omitted some characters, combined several, found a story line that had a beginning and end, and came up with an admirable script. The dialogue is not Pasternak's but the spirit of the screenplay is; and director David Lean, concentrating on this spirit, has made a long, too long, old-fashioned movie in the Russian epic tradition. The film has the sweep of an epic but its characters are not exactly epical. As played by Omar Sharif, Yuri Zhivago is a sweet, gentle doctor-poet, a mild-mannered man who finds himself involved in World War I and working, in spite of himself, for the Red Partisans in the Revolution. He drifts from Tonya, the wife he loves to Lara, the mistress he loves even more. (The film wisely omits Marina his common-law wife by whom he later has two children.) Sharif has the dreamy eyes and looks of a poet, and the film conveys his appreciation of nature and even shows him writing poems, but the little gems themselves are never read to us — although Yuri's half-brother, Yevgraf tells us about them.

This role of the half-brother has been enlarged considerably from the book and is played with a fascinating mystical severity by Alec Guinness who portrays a Revolutionary general as if he weren't quite convinced about the Cause. Most of "Zhivago" is told in flashback form, and scriptwriter Bolt uses this character as the narrator. The film starts and ends with Yevgraf who is interviewing a young girl (Rita Tushingham) who, Yevgraf is sure, is the daughter of Yuri and Lara. This flashback device is both awkward and unnecessary, but it does allow the narrator to comment from time to time on the action — or lack of it when a passage must be bridged. The war scenes, the mob scenes and the shots of the Reds in action are excellent, and if the film never quite conveys whether its characters are for or against the Revolution, the fault is perhaps not so much with the film as with Pasternak's original work. Every now and then, the Russian Revolution seems to take on a fanatic ruthless touch reminiscent of the French Revolution and you almost expect to find Madame Defarge around the corner. You won't find the Defarges, but you will find Rod Steiger giving a lively performance as Komarovsky, an evil villain who might be right out of Dickens.

The two main women in Zhivago's life are his wife, played somewhat colorlessly by Geraldine Chaplin as a pretty, mousy little thing who loses her husband, and his mistress, played by Julie Christie with vigor and determination. Tom Courtenay gives an interesting performance as a Revolutionary who works overtime to live up to his reputation as a zealot. The supporting cast throughout is fine with actors like Ralph Richardson, Siobhan McKenna, Adrienne Corri, Gerard Tichy, and others to add distinction. Talent "Zhivago" has lots of: a good musical score by Maurice Jarre in which a tinkling balalaika plays an important role, some lovely color photography by Fred A. Young, and costumes and sets of great beauty. The shots of Yuri trekking home after being kidnapped by the Red Partisans, the views, interior and exterior, of the wintry house where Yuri and Lara take refuge and many of the landscapes are truly stunning. If you can stick with "Doctor Zhivago" through its cluttered, character-crowded episodes, you're likely to find yourself absorbed throughout with its people, even though they may not be of heroic dimension and with its places, be they natural or man-made. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

SAMUEL HAZO

HAWK IN THE SUN

Over the snow the quiet wings
glided the harrier high and free.
Over the snow the shadow passed,
and nothing moved but the hawk and me.

Lost in the snow I hiked for home,
wading the snowbanks like the sea.
Mine were the only steps in the sun,
but no one saw but the hawk and me.

A bell rang once, a bell rang twice.
Icicles chimed in a frozen tree.
Bells echoed back when the bell was still,
but no one heard but the hawk and me.

Over the snow the quiet wings
glided the harrier higher and free.
Under the silence of wings I walked,
and nothing breathed but the hawk and me.

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The greatest America has

THE VULGARITY OF O'NEILL

THOMAS F. CURLEY

The pithiest criticism of O'Neill is Stark Young's remark about *Welded* (1924): "Gene and Agnes [Boulton, then O'Neill's wife] would sit there, like two little birds. They believed every word of that play. Those vulgar speeches. God."

Those vulgar speeches. O'Neill is dead only 12 years, and yet we have had a definitive biography by Arthur and Barbara Gelb and, more recently, a thorough critical, but not polemical, study by John H. Raleigh (*The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, Southern Illinois Univ. Press. $4.50). More important, the Broadway production of "Long Day's Journey Into Night" and "The Iceman Cometh" on TV have made his two greatest plays eminently visible. Like Dreiser, O'Neill for all his faults seems invulnerable to criticism. But those of us, like me, whose admiration for O'Neill's work is exceeded only by our enjoyment, ought to remember "those vulgar speeches," ought not to dismiss as wrong-headed a consistent and reasoned dislike of O'Neill, even when it is accompanied by the grudging recognition that if he is not great, he's the greatest America has. Robert Benchley, Francis Fergusson, Lionel Trilling, Harold Clurman, Mary McCarthy and Eric Bentley have all had their go at him, but with the exception of Trilling's, their strictures are either technical, about which more later, or essentially that of Stark Young: "Those vulgar speeches. God."

Trilling's criticism is more general and telling; in 1936, after "Days Without End," when O'Neill seemed to be on the Road Back to Rome, Trilling wrote: "For O'Neill since as far back as 'The Hairy Ape,' there has been only the individual and the universe. The social organism has meant nothing. His Mannons, unlike the Atreides, are not monarchs with a relationship to the humanity about them, a humanity that can forgive because it can condemn. They act their crimes on the stage of the infinite. The mention of human law bringing them punishment is startlingly incongruous and it is inevitable that O'Neill, looking for a law, should turn to a divine law." He goes on to remark that "Ah, Wilderness," O'Neill's one middle-class comedy, is essentially ironical ". . . almost cynical. For it is only when all magnitude has been removed from humanity by the religious answer and placed in the Church and its God that life can be seen as simple and good."

This, of course, was before "The Iceman" and "Long Day's Journey," but with some modification it is as true of those plays as his earlier ones. O'Neill's "anti-social" convictions are brought out in George Jean Nathan's account of a visit he and Sean O'Casey had with O'Neill. Before joining him, they had agreed to take O'Neill to task for his seclusion. "Slowly, . . . we edged against his self-defense with lush arguments as to the necessity of an artist's—and particularly a dramatist's—mingling with the stream of life if he is to comprehend it and interpret its depth and mutations." O'Neill listened for quite a while but finally, unable to take any more, he jumped out of his chair and exploded "What you fellows have been saying is damned rot! That mingling with people and life that you talk about, far from giving anything to an artist, simply takes things away from him, damned valuable things. If he hasn't everything in himself, he is no good." In a well-known statement, O'Neill made it even more explicit: "Most modern plays are concerned with the relation between man and man, but that does not interest me at all. I am interested only in the relation between man and God."

That O'Neill ignores society, in the usual sense of that term, there is no doubt, but it is relevant to examine how he does so; it is even more relevant to find out just what he means, in his plays, by the relation between man and "God." In "Long Day's Journey," Mary Tyrone sees a prominent family in the town passing her house:

> "Still the Chatfields and people like them stand for something. I mean they have decent, presentable homes they don't have to be ashamed of . . . They're not cut off from everyone."

Mary, the mother, regrets her social isolation, but we soon realize that this isolation is brought about less by her husband's penuriousness than by her own obsession with the past, with the family past. During her illness, after the birth of her younger child, Edmund, a hotel

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doctor prescribed morphine. She became, and is now, an addict. But the fact of her addiction is less important than how she acts when under the influence: each time we see her, she evades the real present for a progressively more distant past, beyond the birth of Edmund, which she regrets, beyond her marriage, back, finally, to her childhood in a convent school.

The deepest reason why Mary Tyrone does not go *out* into society is that she has an inner life, however sad and demented, in the past which for O'Neill, as for Faulkner, ". . . is never dead, it is not even past." That is why Raleigh links O'Neill and Proust as the two modern writers who tend to believe ". . . the least in the power of environment and to believe the most, almost mystically and certainly atavistically, in the force of heredity. . . ." O'Neill is furiously contemptuous of society in the larger, spatial sense, but the intimate associations men and women form in the family and which endure in time, obsess him. For him, as for Dylan Thomas, "The lips of time leech to the fountain head"; and when he speaks of the relations between man and "God," God is the "force that through the green fuse drives the flower." One may well become impatient with O'Neill's rather crude innerliness, but it is at the core of his imagination. Only in the last act of "Days Without End" and, by implication, in "Ah, Wilderness" does O'Neill place man's magnitude anywhere but in the individual man himself. The truth isolates men; only illusion brings them together.

Dream and Let Dream

"The Iceman Cometh" shows this in the greatest detail and force. The non-paying tenants of Harry Hope's saloon do not share one illusion, each has his own; but they can live together in affectionate hostility on a dream and let dream principle. It is Hickey who disrupts their drunken composure. As in Plato's parable, he has come to deliver the denizens of the cave from the shadows of illusion to the bright light of truth. We, the audience, think so; Harry Hope and his crew are convinced of it, as is Hickey himself. He firmly believes that he has delivered himself from illusion by murdering his wife, whom he loved. Year after year he had betrayed her, and year after year she forgave him. There was no way out but to kill her. Hickey goes on at some length as to why their love for each other made his murder of her necessary. And this conviction of the goodness of his motive explains Hickey's contempt for Parritt who betrayed his mother to the police:

> "I wish you'd get rid of that bastard, Larry. I can't have him pretending there's something in common between him and me. It's what's in your heart that counts. There was love in my heart, not hate."

But Hickey must go on. In order to make them understand he must tell the story of his life and his love for Evelyn. It's like the play within the play in "Hamlet," except that Hickey is both Hamlet and Claudius; for as Hickey tells them of shooting Evelyn he repeats what he said over her dead body: "Well you know what you can do with your pipe dream now, you damned bitch." He immediately denies it, to them and to himself. And then he says he must have been mad, to say it or to say that he said it. And they, of course, agree, since the detectives are there to take him away and it is a convenient defense. So they think: but Hickey truly believes he must be mad since he, more than the others, has been the unwitting victim of the illusion that he loved his wife. Harry Hope has had his illusion shattered, but comes back to the bar, picks up the pieces and goes on as before; so, too, Rockey the bartender, who at the end of the play has regained the illusion that he is a good bartender instead of a pimp and that the girls are good tarts instead of whores. Only Hickey cannot regain his illusion, and in this he is very much like Parritt who commits suicide.

"Not being clearly seen," Eric Bently writes, "the man [Hickey] is unclearly presented to the audience: O'Neill misleads them for several hours, then asks them to reach back into their memory and reinterpret all Hickey's actions and attitudes from the beginning. Is Hickey the character O'Neill needed as the man who tries to deprive the gang of their illusion? He (as it turns out) is a maniac. But if the attempt to disillude the gang is itself mad, it would have more dramatic point made by a sane idealist (as in 'The Wild Duck')."

But Hickey is not a maniac, that *is* O'Neill's point. When his illusion, that he killed his wife out of love, is shattered he wishes he was. And Hickey, of course, is not only the man who tries to disillude the gang, he is the protagonist who, while attempting to rid them of their illusions, discovers his own. Unlike Gregers Werle in "The Wild Duck," a far less complex play than O'Neill's, Hickey suffers and suffers dramatically; it is true that the audience does not know about Hickey until he reveals himself, to them as well as to himself, but it is certainly not unreasonable to ask audiences to remember the first act while watching the last. Indeed, the demand that we re-interpret Hickey's attitudes and actions is in line with O'Neill's deeply felt conviction that it is only in time that man knows himself; he discovers himself only at the cost and at the moment of recognizing his bondage to the past.

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The one exception is Parritt, not Hickey. Of all O'Neill's characters, Parritt is the lowest on the moral scale and Raleigh, in explaining his position there, points out that only Parritt was without illusion: he had betrayed his mother out of hatred, and he knew it. And Raleigh concludes: "For, morally, O'Neill is an intentionalist, and anything is forgivable except an evil motivation." Because Hickey *thought* he loved when he hated, he is higher on the moral scale than Parritt who hated his mother and knew it. He came to New York from California so that Larry Slade, once a lover of Parritt's mother, can, not forgive (that is impossible); but condemn him.

Let me again quote Eric Bentley, who directed "The Iceman" in Zurich and whose criticism of the play is at once intelligent and radically erroneous. He sees that Larry passes a death sentence on Parritt, but then goes on: "Once the diffuse speeches are trimmed and the minor characters reduced to truly minor proportions, Larry is revealed as the center of the play and the audience can watch the two stories (Hickey's and Parritt's) being played out before him." It is not quibbling to insist that there are not two stories, but one. Parritt is part of Hickey's story because Parritt, the wilful murderer without illusions, represents what Hickey, in his enthusiasm for truth, conceives of as a state of bliss. It is in this light that Hickey's contempt for Parritt takes on its proper irony.

That Larry Slade is the center of the play is clear. But what sort of center? Not that of protagonist, since Bentley agrees that Hickey is that. In one sense he is at the center as the Greek chorus is at the center of tragedy. He suffers with the protagonist and interprets the action: as a result of what he has witnessed Larry, in Bentley's words, "is brought from a posturing and oratorical pessimism to a real despair." Unlike the Greek chorus, however, Larry represents no larger social group. The rest of the gang return to their several pipe dreams; only Larry is capable of summing up Hickey's action: all questions, no answers. Unlike Oedipus and Hamlet, Hickey fails. Oedipus discovers the culprit and rids Thebes of the plague; Hamlet, however hesitantly, does succeed in setting things right: but Hickey, who has come to rid the gang (society?) of their illusions succeeds only with Larry, and in learning that he, as physician, had not healed himself.

I emphasize O'Neill's late work, "The Iceman" and "Long Day's Journey" particularly, because they mark the height of his achievement; in them he moves out of the realm of a cultural phenomenon to that of independent genius.

It is a genius, however, that is difficult to like. Harold Clurman has remarked his faulty draftsmanship and just about everybody (an early and notable exception being T. S. Eliot) agrees that he is hard to read. How then are we to account for the terrible and exhilarating beauty of the last plays?

Comes Directly From Life

As early as 1922, Edmund Wilson saw that O'Neill had one quality which set him completely apart from other American dramatists. ". . . he nearly always, with whatever crudeness, is expressing some real experience, some impact directly from life." O'Neill never lost this crudeness and it accounts in part for his greatness as well as for "those vulgar speeches." Let me show O'Neill's crudeness from one of the middle plays, "Days Without End." He was in his forties and already internationally acclaimed as America's greatest dramatist, yet in Act II he could have Lucy say:

> ". . . sick of myself. Particularly sick of myself because I endure the humiliation of Walter's open affairs with every damned floosie he meets! And I'm tired of pretending I don't mind, tired of really minding underneath, tired of pretending to myself I have to go on for the children's sakes, and that they make up to me for everything, which they don't at all."

There is no doubt that Lucy is speaking her mind but we wince nevertheless, she says it out so plain. This is the sort of thing women say in soap operas. It is a real experience, it is directly from life, it is crude, it is the kind of suffering, at once vulgar and intractable, that the sophisticated prefer not to see. And yet O'Neill insisted, not only on seeing but on dramatizing it; and he finally succeeded in shaping mere obnoxious life into art.

He failed in "Dynamo" and "Days Without End" because he attempted to solve what his deepest conviction believed to be insoluble: the radical and irreparable split in man's nature. The real meat of "Days Without End," the play with the "Catholic" ending, is in Loving's remark: "That is, he saw clearly that this situation was the climax of a long death struggle between his wife and him. The woman with him counted only as a means. He saw that underneath all his hypocritical pretense he really hated love. He wanted to deliver himself from its power and be free again. He wanted to kill it." This is exactly Hickey's predicament in "The Iceman," only in that play no God comes out of a machine or a crucifix to rescue Hickey from the knowledge that destroys him, just as no God can rescue the Tyrones of "Long Day's Journey" from their several agonies. If O'Neill was con-

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cerned only with relations between man and "God," that God was not He Whose fatherhood makes all men brothers but the God (or demon) within each individual, a God who isolates, not a God who unites.

The terror of O'Neill's art can be traced, but whence the exhilaration? I think it arises from the paradox that despite his conviction that the split in man is irreparable, he never, in his plays, stopped trying to repair it. In the late plays he creates characters who strive to become whole without his getting in the way of their failure. Not heroes or villains, the Tyrones, Hickey and Larry are thoroughly ordinary, representatively vulgar. They still make their vulgar speeches, but now the speeches take on the mode of action which the characters suffer and endure. And since, like all of us, they can neither accept defeat nor achieve success, we are buoyed up and moved to laughter and tears at the spectacle of derelicts, drunkards and addicts who are supremely human in the need to enjoy, as Unamuno has it, the plenitude of their own individual limitation.

BOOKS

Muriel Spark in Jerusalem

The Mandelbaum Gate

MURIEL SPARK

Knopf, $5.95

LEONARD KRIEGEL

Whatever our virtues, we Americans generally avoid *sensibility* as if it were a devilish ploy designed to strip us of manliness and method. And we have both Norman Mailer and Lyndon B. Johnson to see to it that our blood does not turn to water. Even our humor is tough and manly—*Catch-22, Dr. Strangelove,* Dwight MacDonald. We are, indeed, a very tough people, whose favorite metaphor for the literary profession is that of the boxing world.

All of which is intended as a background against which to measure Muriel Spark's *The Mandelbaum Gate*. For here is a product of a nakedly English sensibility, a novel as enjoyable as it is surrealistic, as meaningful as it is implausible. Since Miss Spark is English, she possesses sensibility without shame. And so she is able to avoid that peculiar American hang-up, toughness; she does not feel the necessity of playing Hemingway (in this country, even the women novelists are tough, i.e. Lady Mary McCarthy and that *kitsch* philosopher for little fat boys from New Rochelle, Ayn Rand). Had she been born in our America, she probably would have been forced to opt for Lady Mary or Fannie Hurst. Fine women, undoubtedly, but they do not exhaust the limits of feminine possibility.

"It is difficult to separate the apocryphal from the true in this part of the world," says Barbara Vaughan, Miss Spark's Holy Land pilgrim. To the recognition of such difficulty, Miss Spark owes much of her prowess as a novelist: she is never guilty of reducing the world to typology alone. Barbara Vaughan's pilgrimage takes place in 1961, against the background of the Eichmann Trial, and what she seeks in Palestine is a sexual, religious, and ultimately personal identity, as many pilgrims have sought before her. But if the pilgrimage and Barbara both seem patent at first, neither is in Miss Spark's hands. A microcosm of the world in the Twentieth Century, Jerusalem is a no-man's land in which each character must assume an identity that is at once both personal and political. The Mandelbaum Gate, the dividing line between Jewish and Arab Jerusalem, is a symbolic passage to personal as well as political being.

Once she has crossed to the Arab side of the Gate, Barbara's adventures can only be described as bizarre. Suspected of being an Israeli spy, she is disguised as an Arab servant, partakes in a dangerous and highly comic escape from a convent, and is hidden in a house on the outskirts of Jericho where she is thought to be a prostitute suffering from scarlet fever by some and a spy for Nasser by a fellow Englishwoman. All of this time, Barbara is being sought by a headmistress with distinctly lesbian proclivities, the headmistress' recently acquired Arab lover, and the British Foreign Office. She eventually makes her way back to Israeli Jerusalem with a young Arab who has declared his personal independence from both the Israeli and Arab worlds and she finally marries the archeologist she loves after he succeeds in gaining the desired Church annulment because of a spiteful ruse of the lesbian headmistress. If all of this sounds excessively complicated, the reader is warned that he has done no more than skim the surface: the minor characters, the sub-plots, the meetings by chance are enough to warm the heart of any prospective Nineteenth Century novelist. And while I would not argue against the frequent critical comparison of Miss Spark to Jane Austen, I would like to point to a certain Dickensian "throw it in the pot and let the juices swap" aspect of this novel as being not wholly unrepresentative of what she is as a novelist.

No character, not even Freddy Hamilton, the fifty-five-year old British consular official, is permitted the luxury of being static. To all intents and purposes, Freddy is a Colonel Blimp, but

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he is a lovable and human one. And if he is sufficiently obvious to warn Barbara to "be careful who you take up with," he is also strangely sympathetic in his own search for a livable morality. Bumbling and all, he is a man—confused, gentle, and striving. And all of it without having to play toughest kid on the block.

What is good about *The Mandelbaum Gate* derives from a fine novelistic sensibility at work in the land of the Lord. It is rich in characters and rich in humor; it is rich in that its author is too good a writer to permit anything to become so embedded in her vision as to obtrude upon her powers of observation. "With God, everything is possible," says Barbara Vaughan when she learns that her lover is to be granted an annulment. But perhaps even God is a creation of literary sensibility in *The Mandelbaum Gate*, a sleight-of-hand magician with whom Joyce would have been at home. It may, Miss Spark hints, be the reason why everything is possible.

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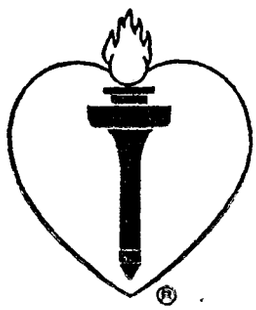

With all that is admirable about this novel, one must close with a warning note about that very sensibility which makes the novel so good and so English. For there are passages in which the sensibility becomes no more than literary exhibitionism, a kind of *New Yorkerish* approach to existence which reduces life to metaphor. The chief difficulty about *New Yorker* writing is that all-too-often it is about *other* people. To a certain extent, this charge can be levelled against *The Mandelbaum Gate*, parts of which originally appeared in the *New Yorker*. For the most part, however, Miss Spark's style matches her subtlety and insight.

Behind the Screen

KENNETH MAC GOWAN

Delacorte, $12.50

GERALD WEALES

Of all the thankless tasks that an author might take on, the two most difficult must be the writing of general history and the preparation of a beginner's introduction to a complicated subject. Unless the author is a stylist or is ruled by a firm sense of the structure of events, his history, whether it be of a country, an industry or a genre, is likely to be little more than a pedestrian collection of facts. Unless he has wit and common sense to temper his practical knowledge, his primer is likely to be as dull as most textbooks were in my childhood.

Even if he has wit and style, his history and his primer are almost certain to be attacked for telling too much or too little, for being too simple or not simple enough. As the subtitle of *Behind the Screen* indicates – "The History and Technique of the Motion Picture" – the late Kenneth Macgowan took on both tasks in one book. It would be gratifying to report that he deserves the thanks of film historians, critics and the general public, but that kind of happy inversion—it used to be standard in Hollywood musicals – is impossible in this case. *Behind the Screen* is a very disappointing book. The disappointment is all the greater because we have been expecting the book for years, since the best section of it began to appear in *The Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television* in 1954, and because Macgowan's career, from movie reviewer to theatrical producer (the Provincetown Playhouse) to Hollywood producer (RKO, 20th Century) to teacher (UCLA), seems ideally suited to give him both the experience and the perspective that such a book needs.

Although there are occasional indications that Macgowan thought of the book as a whole, references to material that has been presented or is yet to come, the book has no organization at all. It is divided into a number of sections, some on history, some on technique, some general chat about the movies (the mass audience, the problem of censorship). It is like a gigantic collection of lecture notes, as though the factual cards from which he spoke were laid end to end.

This impression is heightened by the fact that the chapters are subdivided by running heads so that one is brought up short every few seconds by a reminder that the author is about to embark on a new fact, one that will probably stretch no farther than a paragraph or two. Despite the suggestion of order in such typography, the book is very repetitive and seems the more so because so much of the material in the text is told again in the detailed captions that accompany the illustrations – many of which do not really illustrate anything. For the most part, the book is written in a flat, impersonal way; on the occasions when the author's likes and dislikes break through (the Nazimova *Salome* was apparently his King Charles' head) one gets a glimpse of the man behind the book, but these are infrequent. He even uses his direct experience sparingly.

The best section in the book is the one that gives the ur-history of the motion picture, that describes the various early experiments which led to the camera and the projector that we now have. The chapters on the director, the cutter and the cameraman are a useful

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introduction to the terminology and the techniques with enough concrete examples to make the points clear. These two sections aside, there is little to recommend in *Behind the Screen.*

A reader who knows nothing at all about the movies (does such a creature exist?) might learn from the other parts of the book, but he would do better elsewhere. Macgowan's hop-and-skip history of movies and their makers, such a contrast to the detailed treatment of the machines, offers a few general points and then collapses into lists. One can learn as much from a picture book like *The Movies,* by Richard Griffith and Arthur Mayer, and have a great deal more fun doing it. As for what Macgowan has to say about the audience, about censorship, about the industry today there is little that one would not know if he followed a competent Hollywood reporter (Murray Schumach, Peter Bart) with some regularity and read the occasional movie articles that appear in popular magazines.

Ultimate Questions:
An Anthology of Modern Russian Religious Thought

EDIT. ALEXANDER SCHMEMANN

Holt, Rinehart, $6.95

THOMAS E. BIRD

The reading public has a predictable certainty of being treated to quality, competence, and Orthodox authenticity whenever the name Alexander Schmemann is attached to a work. Father Schmemann's writings in the fields of history, liturgics, and ecclesiology are compelling; his speculations on the relation of Christ to the world place him among the most exciting of contemporary Christian thinkers. His admirers will be disappointed, therefore, with the present volume.

The general introduction is much too slight to orient the tyro adequately for the mélange which follows. Nor do the introductions to the separate essays satisfy. They will seem naïve and superficial to the cognoscenti and of little help to the uninitiated. The bibliographies for individual authors are very useful but the final general bibliography is extremely skimpy and overly eclectic.

Most of the choices are neither representative of the authors nor comprehensive. More seriously there is no attempt at over-all coordination nor at relating the themes to the same problems as they have been considered in the West. Although there is an allusion on the dust-jacket to Buber, Camus, and Kierkegaard, these men are not mentioned by the editor. The writers included figure prominently as spokesmen for unorthodox streams of thought within the Orthodox tradition (giving the lie once again to the perennial canard about "the static condition of Orthodox thought.")

There are sound objections to the advertising statement that "most of the selections have never before appeared in English." Numerically this is true, but over one-third of the pages of text appeared in English as recently as the 'fifties and can be easily obtained. The field of Russian religious thought is not so barren as to require such repetition.

It can only be regretted that a number of major Russian thinkers such as Vyacheslav Ivanov, Karsavin, Kireevsky, Nesmelov, Shestov, and the brothers Trubetskoy continue to be virtually inaccessible to English readers.

Vladimir Solovyov's treatment of "Beauty, Sexuality, and Love," developed in a philosophic rather than in an intuitive way, is one of the two most valuable selections in the book. The

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catalyst for Berdyaev's less profound though better known essay on the creative act, it is very suggestive in dealing with esthetic theory and the philosophy of love. It can take its place with works of Bailey, Guitton, and Gilleman. However, despite the excellence of this piece, it is readily available in English and could have profitably been replaced by some other of Solovyov's reflections, e.g., on evolution.

Rozanov's "Sweet Jesus and the Sour Fruits of the World" is the only other tract which treats of a truly "ultimate question." It is an excerpt from his Christomachist work, "The Dark Face of Christianity," and Rozanov's doubts find their most detailed explication in it. "The World," he writes, "has become rancid in Christ."

Khomyakov's attack on the Western Churches is polemical, even superficial, but deserves to be better known. "On the Western Confessions of Faith" was deemed his enduring contribution to Orthodox thought and was a factor in his being declared (unofficially) "a doctor of the Church." He articulates the notion of *sobornost*, which has enormous implications for the life of the Church today. Fedotov's "Christian Origins of Freedom" is provocative, but the translation is based, curiously, on a truncated version which omits one-half of the Russian original.

The significance of Sophiology as elaborated by Solovyov and Bulgakov is not discussed sufficiently for real comprehension. While tantalized by the statement that "some of [Bulgakov's] doctrines were condemned as heretical," the reader is served merely a potpourri of selections from First Corinthians.

Florensky's book, *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*, deserves complete translation but the chapter chosen, "On the Holy Spirit," is one of the less important. Fyodorov produces a kind of cabala, the inner logic of which is not explained in any way.

The anthology which will suggest the chiaroscuro of Russian religious thought needed today awaits its editor. We can hope that with time Father Alexander will provide us with it. In justice it should also be noted that this book was published "in creative collaboration" with Father Asheleigh E. Moorhouse, who prepared intelligent translations of seven of the nine chapters.

Commonweal in '66

IN THE FIRST two issues of this new year, Commonweal has dealt with such topics as this country's corporate liberalism, Puerto Ricans in New York, the conclusion of the Council, faculty dismissals at St. John's University, the pros and cons of "the New Morality" and the possibilities of a truce in Vietnam. Authors in these first two issues include Carl Oglesby, Gregory Baum, Richard M. Elman, Herbert McCabe, Joseph Fletcher and William V. Shannon.

Coming issues will present, among other features, a definitive article on the Vatican Council by Hans Küng, Gabriel Jackson on the current university crisis in Spain, Robert McAfee Brown on Paul Tillich and Herbert Gans on the poverty in American cities. These issues will also publish to-the-point editorials on issues of the day and the comment of such regular columnists as James O'Gara, John Leo, William Pfaff, Daniel Callahan, Wilfrid Sheed (Stage) and Philip T. Hartung (Screen)—and the analyses of a variety of perceptive book reviewers.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 423*)

added that an American foreign policy solemnly dedicated to stamping out all attempts to redistribute land and power can only lead to chaos and calamity in the end. For what we need is not just a sweeping departure from the merely charitable view of world economic injustice enshrined in *Pacem in Terris*. We need an affirmative theology of social revolution growing out of a dynamic faith in the presence of God in secular history. In most of the world today, the justice envisioned by the prophets and by the encyclicals lies on the far side of anguishing change and dislocation.

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Arthur Koestler once said that the future of our world belongs to the man who is "a mixture of saint and revolutionary." Father Balasuriya sounds like such a man. We should hear more from him and his like in the pages of COMMONWEAL.

HARVEY COX

The Berrigan Case

Stratford, Conn.

To the Editors: This comment is occasioned by the editorial "From Glory to Shame," (December 3). Why is COMMONWEAL so angry at those who transferred Father Berrigan? Certainly Father Berrigan has a right to follow his conscience; is COMMONWEAL so intolerant that it denies the same right to Father Berrigan's superiors? Must all who follow the COMMONWEAL doctrine be sincere and conscientious? And must all who *really disagree* with COMMONWEAL be guilty of shameful and scandalous and totalitarian acts?

Practicing the doctrine of freedom of conscience is very difficult and complex. COMMONWEAL should admit it. Those who really believe in freedom of conscience must strive to attain the stature necessary to grant that same freedom to those who disagree fundamentally as well as to those who disagree in nonessentials. Freedom of conscience can and will produce serious and inevitable conflicts, not because men are malicious or stupid, but because they are conscientious.

There are many who would be vigorous followers of the viewpoints of COMMONWEAL, but for the fact that the COMMONWEAL viewpoint, while proclaiming freedom, seems as dogmatic and as inflexible and as narrow as the authoritarianism it opposes.

It is possible to be deeply committed to great sacrifices in the cause of truth and charity and Christianity and yet be deeply disturbed by the so-called liberal movement. Contemporary "liberals" have released the majority of college students from the "tyranny" of the Church and Scholasticism. It is tragic that these "liberals" are not closer to large groups, perhaps the majority, of these young people. Frightening numbers of them cannot and will not find another source of stability. They are simply waiting for someone else to tell them what to do and what to think. And these same "liberals" are ready to do the dictating. Actually it is hard to tell what dogma will be substituted by what dictator in stabilizing and harmonizing the surging energies of this new lost generation. Perhaps God's Providence will bring forth a leader with a dogma which will foster fruitful living. But the right leader will need more self-knowledge and more genuine humility than most of the so-called liberals who are making the most noise today.

ARTHUR R. RIEL, JR.

Cuban Policy

Toronto, Ont.

To the Editors: I believe there is an error of fact in Mr. C.K. Yearley's reference (Nov. 19) to "Castro's recently announced 'open door' policy."

Though the Cuban Revolutionary Government has in the past restricted (and even now continues to restrict) the emigration of certain classes of persons, it has always permitted Cubans to leave the country in as large numbers as other countries have permitted them to enter. Until October, 1962, the rate of Cuban immigration allowed by the U.S. government was quite large. But at the time President Kennedy's government cut off the flow almost completely. This restrictive policy was enforced by severing almost all communications with Cuba and by ensnarling prospective Cuban immigrants in red tape.

Prime Minister Castro's announcement last September 28 was that in order to outflank the U.S., the Cuban government would extend facilities to any exile who, in defiance of U.S. policy would come to Cuba and fetch any relatives or friends who might wish to go. The exiles took him up on his offer. Thus pressed, the U.S. proposed alternatives. This led to an agreement which, in effect, removed the previous American ban. In brief, it was Mr. Johnson, not Mr. Castro, who recently announced a new "open door" policy.

I fail to understand why the American press has generally misrepresented these facts, which are easily documented, generally known among students of Cuban affairs and, indeed, a matter of public record.

LESLIE DEWART

"Fearsome Clergyman"

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Apropos of my comments on Harvey Cox's work, Father Ron Welsch affirms that I am a "fearsome clergyman who is still using his Roman collar to be heard." This is a rather serious charge and I wonder if Father Welsch would care to offer documentation. I will concede that I do want to be heard: I imagine that most any writer does. But I reread my critique of Cox in vain to find any trace of reference to my priesthood; the analysis, whatever its merits (and I did *not* miss the point of the book), was sociological rather than clerical.

Nor am I aware of ever having used the authority or the position of the priesthood in any of my writings to compel agreement with my stands. I defy Father Welsch to cite a single instance and ask that he withdraw his statement which comes dangerously close to being libel.

A word ought to be said in addition about Father Welsch's gratuitously nasty comment about the parish in which I served. As a matter of fact I have been in three parishes, one in suburbia and two in the inner city. But the point of my critique of Harvey Cox is not slum versus suburbia but university versus city; there is precious little ethnicity in the former and much in the latter, whether it be slum or suburbia.

ANDREW M. GREELEY

REVIEWERS

LEONARD KRIEGEL *is the author of* The Long Walk Home (*Appleton-Century*) *and editor of* The Essential Works of the Founding Fathers (*Bantam*).

GERALD WEALES *teaches English at the University of Pennsylvania. His most recent book is* A Play and Its Parts.

THOMAS E. BIRD *is a member of the Slavic Department at Queens College, New York.*

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